

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

P 212.4.3 Bd. Feb. 1895.
KH353



Harvard College Library

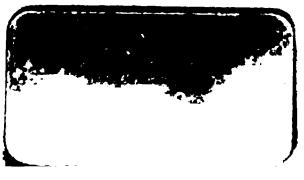
FROM THE BEQUEST OF

JOHN AMORY LOWELL,

(Class of 1815).

This fund is $20,000, and of its income three quarters shall be spent for books and one quarter be added to the principal.

14 Jul. 1894 — 8 Jan. 1895.



"*The Story of our Lives from Year to Year.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME XII.

FROM JULY 7, 1894, TO DECEMBER 29, 1894.

Including No. 288 *to No.* 313.

75

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT 12, ST. BRIDE STREET, E.C.

1894.

676-4
VIII. 102
1894, Dec. 12 – 1895, Jan. 8.

F. M. EVANS AND CO., LIMITED
CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

PRISONERS OF SILENCE. A Serial Story by Mary Angela Dickens, 97, 121, 145, 169, 193, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 481, 505, 529, 553, 577, 601

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT. A Serial Story by Margaret Moule 21, 42

MARRIED TO ORDER. A Serial Story by Esmè Stuart, 1, 25, 49, 73, 115, 139, 165, 187, 211

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MODERN ENGINEERING 540
Acton 31
Adam and Eve 209
Advantage of Standing Armies . 88
Adventure off Cape Horn . . 423
Afghan War Medal 249
Africa, Freeland Colony . . 65
"All's Well," a Story . . . 254
Antarctic Whaling 296
Arctic May-day 84
Ark, The 370
Armies—Some Advantages of . 88
Arms and Accoutrements of the Army 270
Army, The British—the First Formation 270
Army Uniform 274
At the End of the World. A Story 228
Autumn Morning 366
Avignon 135, 161
Avignon Cathedral 137

PARN-OWL, THE 252
Barrington's Marriage . . 323
Bayreuth Festival 280
Beaconsfield 35
Belligerent Women 151
Beroe Fulgens 343
Bewitched. A Story, 236, 260, 283, 307, 332, 335, 379
Bewitchment in Palestine . . 396
Bhopal 471
Black Death, The 11
Blind Larry. A Story . 452, 475
Blue Diamond, The 129
Borrowdale Mountains . . . 58
Boyne—the Battle . . 248, 272
Brahmins, The 392
Bridge of St. Bénézet . . 138
British Standing Army . . 270
British War Medals . . . 246
Bulstrode House 34

CAPE HORN, ADVENTURE OFF . 423
Captain's Conviction, The . . 301
Carrigan Head 417
Carrington Moss 253
Cashmere Gate, The 8
Caterpillars and Moths . . 253
Cats, Poaching 253
Cavalry of the Army . . . 272
Centlivre, Mrs., Plays of . . 299
Century of Feminine Fiction . 537
Charles the Second—Restoration 270
Chat about Laughter . . . 396
Cheshire Moor, Memories of a . 250
Chicago in its Infancy. . . 198
Child's Holiday, A 294
Chillon, The Castle of . . 178
Chiltern Hills, The . . . 534
China War Medal, The . . 249
City of the Nizam 222

PAGE

Civil War—Medals 247
Classics in Education . . . 447
Clive's Victory at Plassy . . 248
Coldstream Guards 270
Colne, The River 33
Colour of the Sea 40
County Council and the Empire 465
County Fermanagh 557
Cowboy on Change 420
Crimean War Medal . . . 249
Crown Jewels, The English . 130
Cuckoo, The 252
Curlew, The 251

DAVID CROWHURST'S ORDEAL. A Story . . 545, 573, 593, 617
Day among the Chilterns . . 534
Delhi 7
Dettingen, George the First at . 248
Devil Dance of Hermis . . 510
Diamond Necklace Story . . 128
Diamonds, Some Famous . . 127
Divination by Old Boots . . 108
Doggett's Coat and Badge . . 184
Donegal, Beauties of . . . 413
Donegal-Killibeg Railway . . 413
Double Trap. A Story . . . 427
Down at the Salt Water. A Story 79
Dragoon Guards 271
Dramatists—Lady Authors . 299
Du Barry, Madame, Jewels of . 129
Duke of Brunswick's Jewels . 128
Dunbar, Fairfax at 247

EASTERN LEGENDS . . 209, 369
Education, Classics in . . 447
Egyptian War Medal . . . 249
Elders, Traditions of the . 209, 369
Electricity, Industrial Development 328
Ely House 439
Emeralds, Stories about . . 127
Emperor Moth 254
Empire Theatre, Attack on . 465
English Regalia 130
Engineering, Modern . . . 540
Enlistment of various Regiments 270
Enoch 370
Equipment of the Army . . 273
Essex, The Earl of—Famous Ring of the 127
Evil Eye, The 396

FAIRIES, WAR AMONG THE. A Story 372
Family Rhymes and Proverbs . 498
Famous Jewels 126
Feminine Fiction 537
Fermanagh County 557
Firefly, The 342
Fire Ships 248
Flanders, The War in. . . 273
Flight of Man 318
Flood, Traditions of the . . 370
Flying Machines 318
Folk Lore of Palestine . . 394
Food Product, A New . . 346
Foot Guards, The 270
Fort Dearborn 198
Freeland Colony Scheme . . 65
Fusiliers, The 273
Futtehpor-Sikri 102

GEM OF THE OCEAN . . . 204
General Schomberg . . . 272
German Superstitions . . 419
Germany, Trade-teaching in . 521

PAGE

Giants, The. 370
Glow-worm, The 342
Gray's Inn Road. 441
Great Mogul 102
Grouse 250
Gulf of Mexico 487

HAMPDEN, JOHN, THE HOME OF 535
Hand Grenades 273
Hannah More—Old World Girlhood 513
Hannah More, Plays of . . 301
Happy Land, The 614
Hatton Garden 439
Hawks 251
Henley Regatta 183
Henry of Navarre - Letter to Crillon 136
Hertzka, Dr.—Freeland Scheme 65
High Wycombe 35
History of the British Standing Army 270
Holborn 438
Holiday Moods 293
Hyderabad 222

IDLERS BOTH. A Story . . 132
Imperial Delhi 7
In County Fermanagh . . 557
Inchbald, Mrs., Plays of . . 300
Incredulity 606
India—Days in Delhi . . . 6
Indian Capitals 569
Indian Mutiny—Medal . . 249
Indian Nautch Girls . . . 392
Indian Sketches 6, 102, 222, 390, 471, 569
Indian War Medal 249
Indians, Massacre by, at Chicago 19
Industrial Developement of Electricity 328
Inniskilling Dragoons . . 272
In the Days of the Grand Tour . 585
Ireland—Singing Schools . . 233
Ireland, Tourists in . . . 413
Isle of France 205

JEANNE OF PROVENCE . . 137
Jewels, Famous 126

KAFFIR WAR MEDAL . 269, 249
Kattie's Wedding. A Story . 14
Killibegs 414
Koh-i-Noor, The. 130

LACE WORKERS 33
Lady Authors 299, 537
La Hogue, the Battle at . . 248
Lake District — Off Beaten Tracks 54
Lakeland—Excursionists . . 195
Lantern Fly 342
Laughter 397
Lausanne 174
Leather Lane 440
Liberty and License . . . 465
Life Guards, The 271
Life of the Party. A Story . 276
Lights at Sea 343
Lights in the Night . . . 342
Little Child, Story of a . . 179
Love, Rev. C., Execution of . 32
Love, The Mystery of . . 19
Luminous Insects 342
Luminous Plants 348

MADAME DU BARRY . . . 129
Manchester Moor 251
"Mandarin, The" 377

	PAGE
Mardale	55
Marine Insects	343
Massacre at Chicago	19
Matchlocks	273
Mauritius	205
May-Day, An Arctic	84
Medals	246
Medusa, A	343
Memories of a Cheshire Moor	250
Mexico, On the Gulf of	487
Military and other Medals	246
Military Knights of Windsor	484
Mill of Minnony. A Story	60
Mitford, Miss, the Dramatist	301
Mogul Architecture	9, 102
Monck, General—The Restoration	270
Montreux	176
Moon Myths	276
More, Hannah	301, 513
More Traditions of the Elders	369
Moths	258
Mr. Mortimer	492
Mystery, The Pleasures of	18
NAUTCH GIRLS	392
Naval War Medal	249
Nelson Victories—Medals	248
New Food Material	246, 346
Nizam, City of the	222
Noah	370
Nocturnal Lights	342
North German Superstitions	419
OFF BEAT-EN TRACKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT	54
Og, King of Basan	371
Old Boots, Divination by	108
Old-fashioned Wit	468
Old Houses in Holborn	410
Old Road to Oxford	31
Old-World Girlhood	518
On some Advantages of Standing Armies	88
On the Gulf of Mexico	487
Opals, Superstition respecting	127
Orloff Diamond	131
Owls	252
Oxford, The Old Road to	31
PALESTINE, FOLK-LORE OF	394
Papal Palace at Avignon	162
Paper	442
Paper for Building Material	445
Papyrus	442
Parchment	442
Parsifal, The Story of	282
Peanut-meal	346
Peninsular Medal	249
Peter Botte Mountain	205
Petrarch and Laura	137
Pigott Diamond	129
Plassy, Clive's Victory at	248
Pleasures of Mystery	18
Poetic Absurdities	354
Popes at Avignon	136
Postcard, The Story of a	36, 69, 92
Presidency Capitals	56,
Punishments in the Army	27,
RECRUITING FOR THE ARMY	275
Redhill, View from	33
Regatta, The First	184
Revolution, The French	130
Rhymes and Proverbs	498
Rhyming Words	156
Rienzi at Avignon	163
Rights of Women	150
Ripple's Relish. A Story	468
Rosthwaite	59
Rousseau	378
Royal Horse Guards	271
Royal Mosque	105
Russian Collection of Diamonds	131
SAINT DENIS, SHRINE OF	130
Schomberg, General, Death of	272
Scots Greys	271
Sea, The Colour of the	40
Sensitive Plant. A Story	400
Seth	370
Shrimpton, the Highwayman	36
Siege of Delhi	8
Singing Schools of Ulster	233
Skylarks	251
Slieve League	413
Soldiers' Medals	249
Some more Traditions of the Elders	369
Some Poetic Absurdities	354
Some Regattas	183
Some Traditions of the Elders	209, 369
So Well Matched! A Story	500, 525
Spanish Armada Medal	247
Spanish Treasure Fleet	248
Sparrow-hawks	251
St. Andrew's, Holborn	440
St. Ethelburga Chapel	439
Standing Armies, Some Advantages of	88
Standing Army, The	270
Staple Inn	440
Starry Heavens, The	346
Stories:	
"All's Well"	254
At the End of the World	228
A Very Modern Historian	589
Barrington's Marriage	323
Beau's Stratagem. A Story	110
Bewitched, 236, 260, 283, 307, 332, 355,	379
Blind Larry	452, 475
Captain's Conviction	301
Cowboy on Change	420
David Crowhurst's Ordeal, 545, 573, 598,	617
Double Trap	427
Down at the Salt Water	79
Idlers Both	132
Kattie's Wedding	14
Life of the Party, The	276
Stories—*Continued*:	PAGE
Mill of Minnony	60
Mr. Mortimer	492
Ripple's Relish	468
Sensitive Plant	400
So Well Matched!	500, 525
Story of a Little Child	179
Story of a Postcard	36, 69, 92
"Thrift"	610
Under the Yellow Flag	517
Wages of Self-Denial	563
War Among the Fairies	372
Will you Walk out with me, Miss?	158
Wizard's Cross	348
Story of a Little Child	179
Sunny Corner of Europe	174
Switzers of Lausanne	176
TANGIER, THE WAR IN	271
Tanjore	390
Thavies Inn	440
Timour the Tartar	7
Trade-teaching in Germany	521
Traditions, Another Batch of	582
Traditions of the Elders	209, 369
"Triumph" Medal, The	248
Trafalgar Medal, The	248
"Tuer Le Mandarin"	377
Two Presidency Capitals	569
ULSTER SINGING SCHOOLS	233
Under the Yellow Flag. A Story	517
Uniform of the Army	274
Uxbridge, The Treaty at	32
VAN TROMP, DEATH OF	247
Victoria Cross, The	250
Volunteer Medals	250
WAGES OF SELF-DENIAL. A Story	563
Wagnerian Drama	280
Walton, Colonel, on the Formation of the British Army	170
War among the Fairies. A Story	372
Wellington's Victories Medals	249
Whaling in the Antarctic	296
Will you Walk out with me, Miss? A Story	158
Windsor, Military Knights	484
Wit, Old-Fashioned	468
Wizard's Cross. A Story	348
Women as Dramatists	299
Women Fiction Writers	537
Women in the Labour Market	152
Women's Rights	150

POETRY.

	PAGE
After Rain	254
Broken Tryst	419
Death Watch	563
Flag, The	109
"If"	447
October	348
Poppies	60

THE EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER FOR 1894,

ALSO

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1894,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

THE EXTRA

SUMMER NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

PRICE] 1894. [SIXPENCE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
MRS. CREEDY'S COMPANION	1	SCUTTLED	31
THE STORY OF BEATRIX	11	AN UNCONVENTIONAL COURTSHIP	41
THE FATE OF A FLIRT	21	PENDRED'S PREDICAMENT	51
LOVE. A POEM	30		

MRS. CREEDY'S COMPANION.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "Miss Kate," "The Laird o' Cockpen," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was not a woman present who did not feel that peroxide was a mistake, and that grey hair—dressed as that grey hair was dressed—sent every dye and colouring into the limbo of vulgarity.

The face was young. The pose of the head, the carriage of the graceful figure, were marked with distinction. If any one in that assembly—drawn to the large concert-hall of Shalemouth by the Annual Orchestral Concert—had been informed that she was a Duchess, they would hardly have been surprised. Very few individuals among the "sets," even the one calling itself the best, had any acquaintance with Duchesses; but the ideal was firmly planted in each mind, and here it was in flesh and blood, minus diamonds. That lack, of course, might be a natural delicacy arising from a desire not to dazzle them all too much; but what need of jewels on a throat and neck so beautiful that they were a living exponent of the hackneyed proverb "Beauty unadorned"? Folds of plain black velvet fell round the stately figure; the creamy blush-rose skin looked exquisite against that sombre background. The full dark eyes fringed by up-curling lashes gazed gravely, but not curiously, on the many faces. Then two women took their seats, and became units in a large, brilliantly-attired audience.

"Who is she?"

The question buzzed about from clique to clique, and set to set. There were three sets comprising Shalemouth society. The retired military considering itself number One; the clerical persuasion, busy, officious, and self-important; and the just "ordinary" folk, well dressed, comfortably off, and content with life as they found it.

The First Section knew nothing of the strangers. The second had not seen them at St. Gudule's, and therefore could not venture an opinion. The third knew they had just arrived at Shalemouth and taken that large house, Vanecourt, on the hill, beyond Dale Park—the house which had been in the family of the Vanstone-Vanes for the last century or so.

The Vanstone-Vanes had gone the way of all flesh, and done as such flesh usually does in its brief pilgrimage—feasted, rioted, wedded, died, leaving at last but one descendant, who by some freak of nature had been altogether different to family traditions: had loved art more than good living, had paid debts instead of increasing them, and finally had let the family mansion and gone on an exploring expedition to the North Pole or South Africa—no one knew which—"and really," said local society, "when a man of such family and position chooses voluntary exile, it matters very little where he locates himself. All one knows is that he has gone."

Society—even such form and phase of it as is found in Shalemouth, feels no absorbing interest in persons who, instead of dining it and entertaining it, desert it altogether for wild and uncivilised portions of the globe. Therefore the sets and cliques of the place had long ceased to trouble themselves about the last of the Vanstone-Vanes, and were surprised now to hear that the grim old mansion had been bought or

rented or something, and that the new possessors were already on the ground.

Shalemouth society was in great form to-night.

Once a year, in April, the Orchestral Society—who had choralised and instrumentalised more or less ambitiously during the winter months—gave a public representation of their efforts. The representation took place in the public Assembly Rooms, a noble building adjoining the principal hotel in the High Street. The Assembly Rooms were used for everything in the way of public entertainment. Theatrical companies visiting Shalemouth gave stock-pieces or variety shows, on a stage which was so extremely limited that the scenery had to be cut down or dispensed with altogether; negro minstrels from Exeter or Torquay paid annual visits, and retailed stale jokes and popular ditties; comic opera even tried to disport itself on these boards, and as they had neither space nor background for display, they had sent skirt-dancers into fits of despair. But one and all of these entertainments were insignificant in comparison with the Annual Orchestral Concert. Then did the stage become a platform whereon the local florist and decorator might display their artistic talents, knowing well that the "Weekly Gazette" would loudly laud their efforts and "lend them bold advertisement." Then did palms and evergreens flourish above the garish footlights, and screens and draperies form a much-needed covering to the whitewashed but mildewed walls. Then also did rows of white-robed maidens—of ages varying from eighteen to fifty—seat themselves before their music-stands in modest annual importance—fair wings of that dark centre sacred to the male phalanx, who tromboned, and oboed, and bassoed, and drummed according to the excited conductor's directions.

It was a noble and beautiful sight. It spoke of local ambition soaring to heights which only the soul of the amateur dare touch—of laudable endeavours to master some great work, at last to be submitted for public approval. For there is one beautiful trait about local performers—it is approval only they challenge, not criticism. They leave that to their weaker brethren in cities.

Every year one great work at least was performed—either choral or instrumental. A few minor ones—trifles by Brahms, or Grieg, or Wagner—filled up interstices of the programme; and the musical menu would further be furnished by such delicacies as local talent—soloising itself magnanimously—delighted or condescended to contribute.

The curate of St. Gudule's possessed a powerful tenor voice—according to the Gazette, and according to such of his friends and admirers as happened to have small rooms. He was always ready to sing a solo; so was Miss Mary Piper, the well-known local soprano, whose voice was shrill and wiry, but capable of immense execution, and who was set down to give the Jewel Song from "Faust." Then there was to be a harp solo by a North German lady of severe appearance, who gave lessons and was much patronised by the Third Section, having lost a husband in the great Prussian War, whose only bequest was a title and a small pension; the first gave her importance and enabled shop-keepers to be condescending, the second lifted her just beyond absolute poverty and enabled her to suit her terms to her surroundings. Meanwhile, to-night, just as the performers had taken their places—just as the last local celebrity had found her numbered seat—just as the rustle of programmes betokened interest in the forthcoming production—these two strangers had swept up the hall, had passed that formidable first row which meant the élite of the First Section, and then taken two vacant chairs a little to the right of the room, and forming the outer edge of row three.

The first woman was elderly, with a bright, good-humoured face and sparkling eyes, and wore a dull-hued gown of smoke-coloured velvet, with a few good diamonds nestling amongst white lace. But the second—well, it was she who riveted all eyes as if by some resistless force—who made the dyed and crêped and tortured heads conscious of their own defects—whose plain, perfectly cut gown defied criticism by its simple elegance, and whose calm, lustrous eyes swept with grave challenge over the curious or wondering faces turned to it.

They had scarcely taken their seats when the conductor raised his bâton, and the Society burst forth into sound, inaugurating their sixth season—to quote local journalism—by a spirited and artistic rendering of that most difficult classical work, Haydn's Surprise Symphony.

"The performance certainly justifies the title," remarked the elder of the two strangers to her companion. "I think it would have been a surprise—to the composer."

In the little lull caused by the conclusion of the Finale and its applause, the remark was distinctly audible to her neighbours. A fire of indignant glances was shot at the presumptuous critic by various eyes, but she seemed quite indifferent to their rebukes, and kept up a running commentary on the various items of the programme and their varied rendering, which was more entertaining than flattering to the performers. The interpretation of the Jewel Song seemed to convulse her with merriment. Indeed, the artless grace and abandon with which Miss Mary Piper assured her audience that "Oh, no! this! is! not! I!" in shrill staccatoed interjections, was well calculated to awaken mirth in any one possessing a sense of humour. That Mrs. Patrick Creedy — the new-comer and prospective tenant of Vanecourt—did possess a more than average amount of this useful quality was apparent by her undisguised enjoyment of the evening, and the undeniable wit that sparkled in her ceaseless remarks. Her companion, graver and more decorous in demeanour, vainly endeavoured to check them. The climax came, however, when the local cleric thundered out that he "would like a soldier fall," with allusions to some proud race whom he desired to gratify by this proceeding, who, if they had heard his untuneful announcement of the intention, would have been tempted to desire its instant execution.

"My dear, I can no more," gasped Mrs. Creedy in half-suffocated accents. "Do let us get out."

She rose as she spoke, laughter on her lips and in her sparkling eyes, and her companion had no choice but to follow.

"Such bad taste," murmured the lady patroness—member of the First Section—who had hitherto always made the first move.

"Atrocious!" echoed her toadies and intimates. "Some vulgar parvenu, I suppose."

But the unconscious objects of these remarks passed serenely down the long crowded room, apparently quite unmoved by the "stony British stare" which met them on all sides.

"I suppose it wasn't local etiquette. I wonder if we've shocked them?" remarked the elder lady as their carriage took them back to the hotel.

"I'm sure we have," answered her friend. "They looked so horrified. I quite expected that grim matron with the ostrich plumes on her head to rise and forbid us to leave."

"I wonder who she is? Dear me, Helen, it will be terrible having to know them all. After living all these years in Ireland I feel that English county society will be more than I can bear. I'm sure to shock them or run counter to their pet notions before I've been here a month."

"You can afford to be independent and choose your own friends," remarked the beautiful woman gravely. "No one will cavil at anything you do, or say, once they know——"

"Oh, but I don't intend them to know," said Mrs. Creedy quickly. "That's just it. They shall take me as I am, or leave me alone. Do you think I'd be bothering my head going into explanations as to my family? Indeed, no! It's bad enough to have to do all that sort of thing in dear Paddy-land, where your very great-great-grandmother's third cousin thirteen times removed can be brought up as a reference; but here—no thank you. Mrs. Patrick Creedy of Vanecourt, that's all I am, and all I intend to be until——"

"Yes?" came the gentle query in that abrupt pause.

"Until I've done what I set my mind on doing when I heard that Vanecourt was in the market. By the way, will you come over the house with me to-morrow? The London people say it's quite finished, and the housekeeper writes that she has the necessary servants at last. We'll go over in the morning and stay to luncheon, and arrange what day we'll take possession."

"Why do you associate me so closely with yourself in all your projects?" asked the other somewhat brusquely. "You know I am a nobody—a paid servant, so to speak, a woman under a cloud, who, but for your charity——"

"Hush, hush! my dear, you must not speak so. In all things you are my equal, save only wealth. I told you when I first saw you that you interested me deeply, even before I heard your unhappy story. When I said I would be your friend I meant it. Heaven knows we women are hard enough on each other sometimes; few of us know what friendship really means. But I am yours, my dear, as I said before, and it will be your own fault if I ever alter in my opinion of you, or my feelings towards you."

"You are far—far too good," murmured the other voice, low and tremulous with suppressed feeling. "I can never repay you, I know. You have made the world a different place to me."

"Nonsense, it's just the same place it ever was, only I've tried to throw a little colour into the dark sides of it. Your temperament is essentially melancholy, you know, Helen, and mine is just the reverse. Hence our suitability. You are the blue paper to the seidlitz powder, you know—the thing that sets it fizzing once it's mixed. I'm afraid my similes are a bit mixed too, but no matter, you understand what I mean."

Laughing gaily, but not boisterously, she alighted from the carriage and ran up the broad steps of the hotel. Her companion lingered a moment behind to gaze at the rippling sea, broad and silver-streaked by moonlight; on the bold headland, tree-covered and green with gifts of budding springtide above the dark red earth of its steep incline; on the hills sloping tier upon tier far as eye could sweep.

It was a beautiful prospect, beautiful as any to be found scattered through this fair West Country. The scent of the wall-flowers bordering in rich profusion the whole length of the sea-wall came fresh and sweet on the soft night air, and the plash of the waves on the pebbly strand made pleasant music.

There was nothing sad or mournful in the scene, one would have thought, nothing surely to bring tears to the quiet watcher's eyes, yet they filled to overflowing in that long silent gaze, and the face lifted to the moonlit sky was full of pathos infinite and inexpressible, as at last she turned and entered the brilliantly-lit entrance-hall, where Mrs. Creedy was chatting away to the head-waiter with an utter absence of dignity which was at once amusing and unusual.

There was a great deal about Mrs. Creedy which at times surprised Helen Cassilis. Not that her eccentricity ever overstepped the boundary of propriety, but only embroidered the skirt, so to speak, of that essentially Grundyfied garment. Still, as her companion sometimes remarked, it was not so much what she did as what she might do, that kept her on perpetual tenter-hooks. Mrs. Creedy had selected Helen Cassilis to fill the post of companion in one of her whims. They had met casually in a little foreign town, where the younger woman was gaining a livelihood as an artist. In a month's time she was engaged as the companion of the rich eccentric Irishwoman, and living a life of ease and luxury that made her previous hard and toilful existence seem only a bad dream by contrast. They had been to all the principal Continental cities, and seen all that was best worth seeing in each. They had been received into the best society, and taken their fill of artistic pleasure. Then suddenly Mrs. Creedy had whisked herself and her friend back to England without any explanation, interviewed lawyers and agents, and finally taken a lease of this old dilapidated mansion, which had been carefully renovated and put into habitable condition, and here, she announced, it was her intention to "settle down."

A lovelier spot she could not well have selected; and as they drove up the steep hillside the morning following the concert, Helen Cassilis grew rapturous over the unceasing panorama of beauty that revealed itself at every turn and curve of the winding road.

Through the lovely flush of the deep red earth the grass was springing to life, and in the budding hedgerows the tender tints of spring leafage mingled with the richer colouring of wild flowers and ferns and creepers. The elm-trees as yet bore only suggestions of coming verdure, which sun and shower of April were at hand to ripen; but chestnuts and limes and lilacs had already burst into bloom, and the air was sweet with their faint fragrance.

As the carriage reached the hill-top its occupants looked back, and an involuntary exclamation escaped them. Far below lay the wide blue sea—blue as a sapphire beneath the sun-glow—on either side the curving coast spread out protecting arms, and tiny bays nestled here and there within its wide embrace. Hill and valley sloped on every side, green with young grass or springing corn. The town itself bore all the enchantment of distance; the broad river that parted it from its sister hamlet of Shale gleamed and sparkled under the slender bridge that connected the two; and over all the golden flood of sunlight poured itself in warm and loving radiance, as if it loved the beauty it cherished so kindly.

"What a pity one's vocabulary of admiration is so limited!" exclaimed Mrs. Creedy at last. "We've said, 'How lovely!' and 'Oh, isn't it beautiful!' to the Pincio, and the hillside of Fiesole, and the Grand Canal at Venice, and the Luxemburg Gardens, and Fontainebleau Forest, and dozens of other places, and we can find nothing more novel or expressive to say of —this."

She gave a comprehensive sweep with her hand. She had all the Hibernian love of gesture, and her beautiful hands were always more or less emphatic.

"We have this same view from the house," she went on, with a glance at the quiet face beside her. "Do you think we shall get tired of it?"

"I can answer for myself," said Helen Cassilis, with a long sigh of rapture; "it is like the entry to Paradise."

"Let us hope with neither Adam nor the serpent to disturb us," laughed Mrs. Creedy.

Then she gave the order to drive in, and the wide entrance gates of Vanecourt opened for its new tenants.

CHAPTER II.

VANECOURT was massive and stately, but also somewhat oppressive. It was "a place of memories," according to Helen Cassilis, moving in her beautiful, stately grace through the endless rooms, having left Mrs. Creedy and the housekeeper deep in discussion as to household matters.

The treasures of past generations were here stored up—paintings, marbles, china, statuary; an old-world grace surrounded the vast rooms, and lingered in deep, shadowy nooks and corners, which modern upholstery had not dared desecrate into "cosy."

The spirit and associations of the place had been carefully preserved by Mrs. Creedy's orders, and it was both beautiful and interesting. Its sombre tones and old-fashioned furniture were relieved only by rich-hued curtains, or tapestries, by the deep glow of an Oriental screen, the colouring of a jar or vase, or dead-gold of a picture-frame. Great palms and masses of flowers stood in nooks and corners of every room and corridor, lending their own lovely finish of colour and fragrance to the artistic perfection that signalised the place.

One long corridor running the full length of the house, and with windows at either end, had been used as a picture-gallery, and here were gathered all the family portraits of the Vanstone-Vanes. Helen Cassilis walked slowly down this corridor, looking at each portrait with more of curiosity than interest. A handsome race decidedly, with many kindred traits of feature descending through the generations represented and catalogued.

At the end of the row she paused abruptly, her glance fastened on one picture—the face of a man still young, though with something tired and mournful in the thoughtful eyes and lined brow. She gazed and gazed, as if incredulous, and then a flush, pained and deep, rose swiftly to her very brows, touching even the white throat with its hot, painful glow.

"How did that come here?"

Her own voice, stifled and terrified, startled her in the utter silence that reigned around. She drew a few steps away and stood looking at the portrait in unwilling fascination, her memory back in some tragedy of the past, her eyes full of dread and uneasiness.

A step beyond, and the loud, cheery voice of Mrs. Creedy roused her.

"Helen! Helen! Where are you? Luncheon is just coming up. What are you looking at? Have you traced any resemblance to me in the thirteenth cousinship?"

She came up to the motionless figure and slipped her hand in the arm nearest her, and they both stood for a moment regarding the portrait.

"The last of the Vanstone-Vanes in the direct line," explained Mrs. Patrick theatrically, as she pointed one finger at the young man; "and the only decent one of the whole lot, I believe. Faith! if it hadn't been for him and what I knew of him, I'd never have troubled my head to get the old place out of the hands of Jews and money-lenders. Not that he'll be thanking me for it, for from all accounts he's as proud as Lucifer."

"What—what was his name?" asked Helen Cassilis, in a low, uncertain voice.

"His name? Why, Dudley, of course. Didn't I ever mention it to you before?"

"No," was the cold response, "I wish you had. Had he another name besides that?"

"Indeed, yes. The Vanstone-Vanes were mighty fond of names, and never content with just the one needful. Dudley Lambert Carew was the whole, I believe, and enough for any Christian to bear, I'm thinking. I'd have lopped off a few if I'd been he; maybe he did, for it's precious little I know about him. You see, my dear, I'm quite a branch line. One of the first Vanstones married an Irish girl, and the family didn't take to her very kindly, and then her daughter married an Irishman and settled over in Belfast, and 'tis from them I came, though my husband—rest his soul—made all his money in trade, and they were all too high and mighty to know us. However, it's queer the workings of Providence, for here am I, able to buy up the whole property, if I choose. Yes, and leave it to Dudley or his heirs, seeing that I've neither chick nor child of my own to care for."

The listener's face had grown quiet and cold once more during this harangue. She made some casual remark and then turned abruptly away, and they descended the broad oak staircase and entered the dining-room just as the luncheon-bell had rung for the second time.

Shalemouth society was much exercised in its mind. The news had burst upon it that the "person" who had behaved so strangely at the concert was the new owner of Vanecourt, the place of the place.

The First Section, who did not condescend to gossip—more than was absolutely necessary to keep itself conversant with passing events—was the last to hear of this. So it came to pass that when its leader, the lady of the ostrich plumes, by name Mrs. Lorrimer, at length signified cards might be left at Vanecourt, the visitors learnt to their horror that the Third Section had already been made welcome and were firmly established in the good graces of the newcomer.

Furthermore, Mrs. Lorrimer, who was short-sighted and somewhat obtuse, made the egregious mistake of taking Mrs. Cassilis for Mrs. Creedy. It had never occurred to her that the stately, beautiful woman who had created such a sensation by her appearance could be merely the paid companion of the fussy, loud-spoken, bustling lady who was pouring out tea in the great dusky drawing-room, and chatting volubly to the North German lady who was seated in a comfortable arm-chair discussing tea-cakes and tea with equal gusto.

The First Section, of course, knew Madame von Schwertz, she had harped at its "At Homes," and had been permitted to give concerts under its august patronage, but the First Section did not call upon her, and most assuredly would never have dreamt of offering her tea and cakes in its drawing-rooms. Mrs. Lorrimer was aghast at the sight, and perhaps it in some measure added to her confusion, for she greeted Mrs. Cassilis cordially and Mrs. Creedy stiffly, and sitting very bolt upright on one of the most straight-backed chairs in the room, she addressed her entire conversation to that lady, and never discovered her error until she was saying good-bye. The quiet rebuke to her gushing invitation to "call soon"—"Pardon me, I fear you have made a mistake. I am only Mrs. Patrick Creedy's companion," nearly crushed her; a few of the objectionable Third Section, hugely enjoying finest tea and choice concomitants and pleasant society, smiled knowingly at her confusion. She had neither the tact nor presence of mind necessary to remedy her error. The look of blank horror, the flush of indignation, were eloquent of her feelings. Muttering something indistinctly, she crossed over to Mrs. Creedy and began a hurried apology.

The Irishwoman had enjoyed the joke too much to let it pass. She put on her strongest brogue, her most pronounced manner.

"Mistake is it? Faith then, me dear madam, I'm not wondering at it. Why, Mrs. Cassilis is twice the lady I am. I only engaged her to tache me manners!"

How Mrs. Lorrimer got out of that drawing-room she never knew. An earthquake could scarcely have confused her more. But she was a "power in the land," and her word went forth. This woman could not be known; no, in spite of her wealth, her position, her ability to entertain, she was not of the stuff that the First Section delighted to honour. They could not "dine" her, neither could they "At Home" her; it would be impossible. As for the companion, an upstart, a nobody, who looked and spoke like a queen and dressed like a duchess, well, what could be said of her? No doubt she was a mere adventuress and had a story, and was no better than she should be. They suspected toilet secrets with regard to that wonderful complexion; it might almost be enamelled, and really a person with grey hair ought to wear caps, not dress it in that fantastic fashion, for all the world like some picture by Reynolds or Romney. The First Section was always delightfully vague on matters appertaining to art.

Meanwhile, mirth and talk ran riot in that big, old-fashioned drawing-room of Vanecourt.

Madame von Schwertz was eloquent, and dearly did Mrs. Creedy delight in her curious English and quaint expressions; and nothing pleased her more than to "draw her out" with respect to the treatment she had received at the hand of Shalemouth society.

"Ah, madame, it is not to be believed what I have suffer when I first came here. I so honoured, of so great name in my own country! I go to London, I play; ze great artists hear me. They say, 'No harp now, it is not desired. It is all ting-ting.' Ah, madame, but it is not all 'ting-ting' when ze soul of ze player is in ze strings. Zen I have one letter to a lady whose

daughter she desire to learn, and we come here, and here I remain, and have to teach who I can. Ze little girl of ze grocer and ze young mees at ze counter of ze big draper. Ach, herr Gott! but it is hard, madame—it is very hard."

"I am sure it is, dear Madame von Schwertz," said Mrs. Patrick sympathetically. "But you shall give a concert here, if you like, in my rooms, and I'll make the people come. They shall take guinea tickets too, and I'll have some smart people down from London, and we'll set you going—see if we don't."

"Ah, madame, you are very good—you have ze generous heart," said the grateful artist. "It is well there are such as you in dis hard world. Zat Madame Lorrimer, now—ach, but she is different—how different, so high and mighty as she to me has been. Never ze shake hands, oh, no, and so of a condescension to take two—three little tickets for my concert—half-a-guinea for ze three, I ask no more—and of that she giv me ten shilling because I ask for a flower from her conservatoire to wear for my toilette. 'Madame,' I say, 'I see you have ze camellia "en branche" in your glass-house. It is ze one flower I wear in my hair in Germany. Will you do me ze favour to give me it?' And she give it me, my dear madame, oh, yes—but she took off ze sixpence as I tell you; and when I am in ze town ze day of my concert I see dozens of ze same camellia 'en branche' in a shop, and I ask ze price, and they is—fourpence each!"

She stopped, breathless from rapidity of speech and indignation. Mrs. Patrick was in ecstasy. This was the sort of company she delighted to entertain. None of your starched, stiff, self-important folk who worshipped so conscientiously at Mrs. Grundy's shrine, and wanted to know chapter and verse of your antecedents before they could offer you a cup of tea, or say "good morning."

She kept Madame von Schwertz to dinner, and made her play tender bits of Schumann and Chopin on the big Steinway grand afterwards, while the scents of the garden and conservatory came in through the open windows, and far off the great wide stretch of sea took lovely tints from sunset and twilight.

"What a beautiful home you have, madame," said the artist softly, in the interval of those dreamy fragments which her fingers interpreted independent of eyes or music.

She spoke to Mrs. Creedy, but her eyes were on the lovely, musing face of Helen Cassilis, who was leaning against the open window.

"Yes," she answered. "It is almost too perfect, when one remembers how harsh and cruel a world lies so close."

"It will not be harsh or cruel to you. You have ze beauty, you can make it bow before you. It is only a woman who is old, and ugly, and poor, and quite alone who knows how terrible zat world can be."

A shiver ran through the stately form. The eyes that for one brief moment turned to the queer, homely face at the piano were full of mortal pain. They startled Madame von Schwertz into playing a false note.

"Ah! what is it, then?" she half whispered. "Trouble? Even you, so beautiful, so young; ze trouble of woman?"

"Yes," said the quiet voice; "the trouble of woman. Which of us can escape it?"

Softly and dreamily the lovely springtime deepened into the yet more perfect loveliness of summer, and the grounds of Vanecourt were a maze of brilliant blossoms, flourishing here in almost tropical luxuriance, sheltered as they were by the tall growth of Wellingtonia, by pines and firs, and stately avenues of chestnut and groves of beech and oak.

The drowsy days drifted by in pleasant idleness, their mill-pond placidity only touched here and there by some ripple of life from the outer world, but neither stirred nor disturbed by it as yet.

Mrs. Creedy seemed strangely attached to her companion. In all her drives and walks they were together. The cool, light evenings saw them drifting up the beautiful river, Helen Cassilis rowing with the strong, regular stroke of long practice, and the elder woman lounging amidst the cushions in the stern, a broad straw hat shading her good-humoured face, a loose silk blouse belted round her portly figure.

"Comfort before appearance, my dear," she had said to Helen Cassilis. "I don't say a blouse is becoming to my charms, but I can afford the sacrifice for the sake of the convenience."

It seemed to Helen Cassilis that this idle, pleasant life was almost too good to last, a long calm which must eventually be succeeded by storm. Peace to her had always been the presage of trouble, a thing to be dreaded more than welcomed. Besides,

she was living, as it were, on the edge of a volcano.

At times she reproached herself for having withheld a secret from the kind-hearted woman who had been so true a friend; at others she felt that she could not have borne to speak of it to any living soul; that all who knew would despise her as she despised herself. She was not a coward, but her life had been so hard and terrible that it was little wonder she clung to this present foothold as a shipwrecked mariner clings to the rock the rugged sides of which seem at least to promise safety, if not rescue, from the raging sea beyond.

CHAPTER III.

THE severe and simple elegance of her companion's toilet sometimes provoked Mrs. Creedy to good-humoured, though somewhat disparaging comments.

"You are but twenty-eight, and you try to look forty," she said one night when she had accompanied Helen Cassilis to her room, and insisted on her turning out her stock of gowns for inspection. "Black—always black. Not but that it suits you; but people will say I make you use it as a uniform, like shop-girls. Black velvet, black cashmere, your linen blouses are the only approach to colour I've seen on you, and then you chose that horrid dark shade of heliotrope. What it is to have a skin! I could never attempt such a shade as that."

Helen Cassilis smiled. She was turning over the contents of a wardrobe drawer as Mrs. Patrick had ordered, in her good-humoured, masterful fashion, to find some suitable attire for a garden-party the next afternoon.

"No, you shall not wear that eternal blouse. I'm sick of them; and every girl will sport one, as there's going to be tennis. What idiots women are to play that game, and in such weather, too! If they could only see themselves tearing about, going into the most ungraceful attitudes, getting hot and damp and untidy! Ugh! if I had a daughter she should never touch a racket in public. Well enough, if the exercise is so beneficial, to have a game in your own grounds with only your own people to see what a sight half an hour of it can make of you. But to challenge public criticism, racing here and there with a lot of men in their shirt-sleeves, I call it disgusting!"

"What a tirade!" exclaimed Helen Cassilis, laughing. "A pity the revolting daughters cannot hear you. You know the emancipated woman is going to do everything men do. It will be football next, and female jockeys."

"Fools!" sniffed Mrs. Creedy contemptuously. "As if any woman can better herself by stepping out of her own proper sphere."

"But her sphere is everywhere," smiled Helen, who always enjoyed a passage of arms with the impetuous Irishwoman. "What did I read you to-night—

> They talk about a woman's sphere
> As though it had a limit.
> There's not a place in earth or heaven,
> There's not a task to mankind given,
> There's not a blessing or a woe,
> There's not a whisper—yes or no,
> There's not a life, or death, or birth
> That has a feather-weight of worth,
> Without a woman in it!"

"Exactly," snapped Mrs. Creedy with contempt. "She's everywhere, whether wanted or not; and her value, under the circumstances, is the poet's estimate—'A feather's-weight of worth.'"

"Well; there's always two ways of looking at things," said Helen Cassilis; "it never struck me to put that unflattering interpretation on the poet's summary of our ubiquity."

"What's that? What are you covering up so quickly?" asked Mrs. Patrick suddenly, as she sprang from her chair. "Lace—and what lovely lace; and—good gracious, Helen! what's this?"

The flashing interrogation of her startled eyes changed to wonder as she saw how white her companion's face had turned.

"I—really—excuse me, Mrs. Creedy," she stammered, "but you have no right to pounce upon my property in this unceremonious fashion."

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Creedy coldly. She handed back a large photograph as she spoke. "I was not aware you were acquainted with any member of this family. Yet people don't give away photographs to strangers, as a rule."

For a moment Helen Cassilis stood there dumb and shame-stricken, the photograph in her trembling hands; but her eyes were resting on the face so truthfully limned.

"I—I ought to have told you," she faltered, "but I had not courage; and when I came here I did not know——"

"Did not know that you were coming to the very house of the man whose picture you hold, did not recognise his portrait in the gallery yonder the first day you set foot here, Helen."

The reproach in the kindly voice was more than those overstrung nerves could bear. She threw the photograph into the open drawer and fell on her knees before her friend.

"Oh! it is so hard to speak of—now," she cried. "So shameful. Oh! believe me, I have been most unhappy with this—this secret between us. Often and often I longed to tell you, and I could not find courage; and now, I suppose, you will never believe——"

A heavy sob broke the words, and in the silence that followed she lifted her head, and her beautiful sorrow-filled eyes gazed pleadingly into the face which never before had worn for her so cold and stern a look.

"I will believe—just what you choose to tell me, Helen," said Mrs. Creedy, with a quiet dignity which no one would have recognised as possible to the rollicking, good-humoured Irishwoman she had represented. "I hope our friendship has proved me worthy of truth at least, if not of confidence. I claim no right to pry into your past life. I ask no more than you choose to tell."

"I will tell you all—everything. Then—you must act as you please."

Her tears were dried now. Something akin to desperation was in the great soft eyes, the white, rigid face.

"You know my story—the story of my marriage," she began, her voice firm now, but very low and self-restrained. "I told you how wretched it was, how, with no will or wish of my own, I had been given to a gambler—a drunkard—an assassin, that all my youth had shrivelled away in the furnace of horror into which I had been thrown. I told you that at last freedom came; but one thing I did not tell you. It was that when he—this man who called me wife—was in prison, I met another. Truer, nobler friend never woman had. We met as artists meet on foreign soil; you know the 'camaraderie,' the freedom, the unrestraint. He was travelling and sketching for some English journal. I only knew him as Dudley Lambert. For two short months we were constantly together. He thought me a widow, and I—I never had the courage to undeceive him. How could I tell one so noble and honourable the shameful history of the man whose name I bore? I never once thought our friendship meant more then just what it seemed to mean, what it was safe to mean; never—till one mad moment broke down the barrier, and I knew he loved me."

"You—you told him then?" came breathlessly from the listener's lips.

"No; I was too cowardly. I had never been happy before in all my life, in childhood, or youth, or womanhood, and this—oh, I cannot tell you what it was. He was different from any man I had ever met. Strong, gentle, noble, fighting with misfortune and contumely, so brave, so true. I think often it was that that made his great charm. One felt his truth. One knew he would not change or forget easily. Now there are times when I pray he might—when I hope he has forgotten."

She broke off with a little bitter laugh.

"I let him love me," she went on. "I let him believe that I loved him, until—my hour of liberty was over. Oh, I know what you will say; it was cruel, shameful, unwomanly. Then, oh, that time seems all like something tearing, uprooting my whole life, my very self. I came out of it as you see me now"—she touched the soft white hair with a little pathetic gesture, and then rose feebly, uncertainly to her feet.

The touch on her arm was very gentle.

"You have not told me all, Helen?"

"No," she said, a quick, hot flush dyeing her white face. "For when I have told you, it will be time to say good-bye. I never ought to have come here. I never ought to have stayed an hour once I knew."

"Hush, my dear, hush! Am I not a woman, too?"

"There is not much more to tell. When I knew that my tyrant was free once more I grew terrified. I knew what he was, jealous, passionate, as all Italians are. I threw myself on the mercy of the man I loved, and I asked him—oh, don't look at me! sometimes I wonder how I can bear any good woman's look—I asked him to take me away with him. He was going to Africa then. I should never be traced, never be found, and I thought he was like other men; but he was not. Oh! thank Heaven for that. I can say it now, though then I thought my heart would break for shame of his refusal, for—he refused. From that hour to this I have heard no word of him."

"And you are free now?"

"I am free. But you know at what a cost. My husband died a felon's death for political assassination. Think?—and she laughed harshly—"think what our dear Mrs. Lorrimer would say if she knew that for one half-hour of her immaculate life she

had conversed with the wife of a murderer, and mistaken her for the mistress of Vanecourt!"

"Oh, my poor child!" The motherly tone, the kind face touched the sorely-tried woman as she had never thought she could be touched again.

"You—you should not pity me," she said. "I am a wicked woman, nothing can alter that. Even he thinks so, though he was very merciful. He might have called my conduct by a harsher name than he did. Oh, don't look so sad! I deserve all I have suffered. My history is only the history of so many women."

The tears were streaming unheeded down Mrs. Creedy's kindly face.

"I wish you wouldn't speak like that," she implored, "it makes my heart ache. To think you have borne all this secretly, silently, day for day, and I have made you my bond-slave, sent you here and there, distracting, worrying, claiming you. Oh, I hate myself when I think of it!"

"You have been all that was kind and good and womanly. For heaven's sake don't speak as if I deserved consideration at your hands. If you turned me from your doors now, you know——"

"Helen, if you dare say such words, I'll—I'll be tempted to show you what an Irish-woman's temper is like! We are staunch in our loves and hates, if in nothing else; staunch to death. I'll say no more, but the day will never dawn when you'll leave Vanecourt with Honoria Creedy's freewill."

The eyes of the two women met. Then it seemed as if what pride and suffering had not done, this unexpected sympathy effected, for with a little faint protesting cry, the stately figure slipped from those encircling arms, and lay white and still as marble on the floor.

More and more Shaleworth society marvelled at Mrs. Creedy's infatuation for her companion. They agreed it was bad form altogether, and only excusable on the ground of Hibernian eccentricity; but as the months slipped by and the cuckoo's note again heralded the spring, and the freshly budding leafage leapt gladly from the brown boughs to welcome sun and shower of April, they began to whisper that some strange subtle change was evident in Helen Cassilis. Pale she had always been, but this curious transparent pallor was a sign of more than delicacy. The large deep eyes seemed larger and more sombre in that strange framework of soft grey. "And yet she looked so young," they said curiously and wonderingly, as if scenting the secrets of a Rachel or a Ninon de l'Enclos beneath that spiritual and delicate loveliness.

Mrs. Creedy noted these signs with dawning terror. She saw that something was radically wrong. The secret springs of unhappiness in feminine nature have much to do with the workings of that curious and delicate machinery. Helen Cassilis was dying of unhappiness, and secret intolerable shame. That was the long and short of it. Doctors might talk as they chose of "want of tone," but a woman sick at heart, consumed by vain love and longing, and stung to ceaseless torture by her own self-scorn, is not a woman to whom life can be attractive, or even desirable.

"I must do something," thought Mrs. Creedy desperately, as day after day showed no improvement, only failing strength and failing spirits. "If I could only find out where he was! Good gracious"—as a thought suddenly struck her—"what a fool I've been all this time!" For she suddenly remembered that a certain illustrated journal, delivered weekly in company with all current magazines and journals, was an object of the deepest interest to Helen Cassilis. Doubtless it contained the sketches of South African life which Dudley had been engaged to give, and for which he was risking life, health, and happiness.

A wire to the office of that same journal soon brought confirmation of this fact, and the address of the absent artist. The next mail bore a long explanatory letter to the "thirteenth cousin," which had so overwhelming an effect upon that relative that the very next steamer from Cape Town had him on board, and the sketches were relegated to the somewhat amateurish execution of a friend at Pretoria.

A month is not a very lengthy period of time, but every twenty-four hours of every day of that month were full of agonising suspense to Honoria Creedy.

"Men are so queer, one never knows what they will do, or how they will take interference," she said to herself, wandering distractedly to and fro the beautiful grounds. "I put it as strongly as I could. I told him I knew the whole story, and that she was just dying by inches. If he ever wanted to see her again he must lose no time. Oh, surely he will come—his face looks kind, proud as it is; and then—well, I must leave the rest to nature—or love. All this is free

from debt," and she looked lovingly at the beautiful old house on which the moonlight rested, "and it will go back to him—even if he won't live here during my lifetime. Perhaps he will for Helen's sake."

The suspense ended at last. Love had conquered pride, and Dudley Vanstone-Vane was bringing in person the answer for which his Irish cousin had pleaded.

The risk was great, she felt, but happily it was run with safety. Happiness is not often fatal, and Helen Cassilis could bear even its wonderful and overpowering promises before another summer bloomed.

The shock was more beneficial to her than to the society of Shalemouth, whose delight at the return of the long absent owner of Vanecourt was considerably lessened when the local journal gave forth the interesting information that the said "owner" was shortly to be united in the bonds of wedlock to the beautiful widow they had only known as "Mrs. Creedy's companion."

THE STORY OF BEATRIX.

By LEWIS MACNAMARA.

Author of "Murty Mulligan's Revenge," "Among the Little People," "A Perfect Faith," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE glory of summer lay upon the land. Stately tree and swelling upland stood dressed in holiday attire—each wearing its chosen green—to do honour to the great burnished sun, who flung his halo over everything, making all the exquisite harmony of light and shade. The distant cliffs that stood knee-deep in the sea had drawn about them their dark mantle of gorse, encrusted with its gorgeous, flowering gold, and every little bush by lane-way and stream had set wild flowers—dog-rose, sweet-briar, and the rest—in its tangled meshes as a village maiden hastily decks her hair for the dance.

Down in the gardens where the ivy-covered Grange stands deep in its trees, the dainty flowers in trim rank and file were keeping the feast in more orderly fashion, if with more pomp and circumstance, than their gipsy sisters in forest and field. That is where the Kingscotes live — Mrs. Kingscote, and her son, and Cicely Villiers, who is her adopted daughter. They had been a merry party all the spring, for Beatrix L'Estrange had been there since March, and wherever Beatrix was she made everybody as gay as herself.

Reginald Kingscote and the girls were on the sands this glorious afternoon, making the dogs swim races for sticks until there were no more sticks to be found.

"I never saw such a 'barren, barren shore,'" said Beatrix, searching about in the sand; "all the sticks we brought down are gone out to sea, and there isn't another anywhere."

"We may as well go back to tea, then," said Kingscote, "since our only amusement is gone. Grant is coming for a game of tennis."

"Do come, Trix," pleaded Cicely, who was tired of dry sand and wet dogs.

"I suppose I must; I want my tea. But I am tired of tennis; I shan't play this evening."

"You must, to make a fourth," said Cicely.

"Yes, for the entertainment of the Rev. Mr. Grant, forsooth! Because the reverend gentleman wishes to exercise himself at tennis, I am to have the inestimable privilege of serving him with nice gentle balls."

"How ridiculous you are, Trix. You know you like him."

"Oh, he's not bad, you know," said Trix, with the faintest blush in the world; "but we don't quite hit it off, Cis. I am distinctly a layman's woman. I don't understand his 'Dorcases,' and 'Mothers' Meetings,' and all the rest of it."

"Why do you talk so much about them to him, then?"

"These are proper subjects of conversation for an ordained priest, my dear," answered Beatrix with mock solemnity.

"Is it proper to flirt with an ordained priest?" asked Cicely demurely.

"Couldn't be more so; especially when he likes it."

"Likes it? Well, I suppose he does. I never could conceive Mr. Grant indulging in such a pernicious amusement until you came here. You'd make any one flirt, Trix."

"I should unless he began of his own accord," said Trix flippantly. "But where's Mr. Kingscote?"

"Here he is," said Cicely, looking back. "He's coming with the dogs, and Mr. Grant is with him. He must have walked out by the beach."

"And here come all the dogs," cried Trix, lowering a crimson sunshade to receive a charge of five dogs. "Go away, Sancho! Ginger! go down! If you soil my skirt I'll never throw things for you to swim after again!"

But the dogs insisted on pretending that they hadn't seen her for a year, and danced round seeking a weak spot in her defence, until Kingscote and the curate came up and drove them off.

"You might have run, you know," said Trix, looking aggrievedly at the curate.

"I'm sure I'm sorry I didn't," he said; "but to tell the truth, I didn't think you were in any immediate danger."

"I wasn't, but my dress was."

"I never thought of that," he confessed.

"You are very stupid, Mr. Grant," said Trix severely, whereat he opened his mouth to answer, but remained dumb, for he never was quite sure when she was serious.

"You two people have begun quarrelling as usual," said Kingscote. "Come home to tea, and don't set a bad example to your parishioners, Grant."

"I'm not quarrelling. Mr. Grant tried to begin it, but I wouldn't," said Trix calmly. "Now don't look incredulous," turning to him, "it's rude. I'll forgive you if you will help me to get some sea-anemones."

"Oh, Trix, do come. It's long past five."

"How greedy you are, Cis!" said Trix sweetly. "You two can go on—we'll catch you up long before you are at the Grange. I want my tea far more than you, but I nobly endure the pangs of hunger in the pursuit of culture!"

"Don't be long, then; Reginald and I will go on."

Trix gathered her white skirt about her dainty ankles and walked down the shingle to where the wet rocks raised themselves above the tiny wavelets that tried to leap them.

The curate walked by her with great contentment. He was a tall, fair-haired man, with rugged, manly features and innocent, childish blue eyes which looked strangely out of keeping with the rest of his face. He met few girls in his country curacy, and never gave a second thought to any until Beatrix L'Estrange came into his life; she fascinated him from the first, though it was with a charm that was not altogether pleasant. For her little affected airs and flippant speeches jarred on the big, honest man, who still held his mother as his ideal of what a woman should be. But he believed, though sometimes it was hard, that beneath the frivolity—that had a charm of its own too, he allowed—there were all the noble and tender feelings that make a good woman such a precious thing.

When they came to the shore she pointed out what she wanted, and the Rev. Anthony Grant went down on his knees and grubbed about the sides of the slippery rock, much to the detriment of his broadcloth. Trix stood with her dainty toes almost in the water, and directed the operations. The curate laid his spoil on the sand, and tucking his sleeves up further returned to the fray.

"There are some fine ones there," he said, pointing to a flat rock some feet out in the water, and with one great stride he was on it.

"Bravo!" cried Trix. "I'm coming too," and laying her parasol on the shingle, she made ready to jump.

"It is too slippery," he said, "you had better not."

"Of course I shall."

"It is much too slippery. If you really want to come, you must let me carry you," he added simply.

"And what would your charming, enlightened congregation say if they saw you carrying me about the coast?"

"I don't care. But you mustn't try to jump."

"Mustn't? Who says so?"

"I do," he said quietly. "I won't allow you, as there is no one else to prevent you."

"You can't prevent me."

"Yes I can, and I shall," he said, stepping ashore and standing next her.

Trix coloured with vexation, and looked up defiantly at him, but her eyes fell beneath his, and she turned away, saying:

"Well, come home, then, and don't bully."

"I'm sorry," he said, gathering up the wet sea-weed, "but I couldn't let you, you know. It wasn't safe."

Trix was on the point of saying something to make believe she was angry with him, as she had many a time done to his exceeding discomfort, but something in the manly simplicity of his manner checked her, and she walked by his side in silence. It was the first time any one had mastered her, and she found the experience rather pleasant than otherwise.

"You aren't angry with me?" said Grant presently.

"No. It was very kind of you," she answered, in a lower voice than she meant to, and without raising her eyes.

But there was enough in her tone to make the man's big heart thump at his ribs, and he would have called her by her name, his

honest eyes all alight, but before he could get the word out the slimy weeds slipped through his fingers to the ground, and the spell was broken.

She laughed at his awkwardness, and insisted on carrying them the rest of the way herself.

They found the others drinking tea on the tennis-lawn, and Trix told them that she had to carry the "nasty wet things" because Mr. Grant couldn't. Kingscote brought her tea and waited attentively on her, while his mother looked up from the work she held — she was always doing strange devices in crewel work—and smiled approvingly. Grant had an abstracted look, and hardly joined in the conversation. Then they played tennis, and Mrs. Kingscote sat and worked.

She was a spacious lady, Mrs. Kingscote, as placid as the summer sea, and her chief virtue was her love for her son, and that did duty for a lot of other virtues which were absent. One of those excellent Christians she was, whose pet and only philanthropy consisted in marrying other people to each other. She had brought about more than one hopelessly ill-suited alliance in her day, a crime which she invariably laid to the charge of the allied pair; for she always felt that she had done her duty, and that any subsequent friction on the part of the unhappy couple who had reaped the benefit of her worldly wisdom was in very bad taste. She had two peculiarities in her plan of campaign which were a little trying. One was a candour which was variously termed "barefacedness" or "brazenness," according to the degree of friendship professed by the many unappreciative critics of what they euphemistically termed her "little games." The other was her persistence in using the first person plural of the pronoun when she announced her most daring schemes, by which subtlety she blandly enrolled all present as fellow conspirators. And now she was full of plans for her son's immediate future. She had it all settled long ago. Dear Reggie is to marry Beatrice L'Estrange, and Cicely is to pair off with the curate. What could be more natural?

"Of course, we would like to see Cicely mistress of the Grange," she had said to the Vicar's wife; "but dear Reggie ought to marry where money is, and I think Cicely will accept Mr. Grant."

And while she sat in her basket-chair, thoughtfully examining silks of every hue, her busy brain was plotting and planning. She determined to take Cicely into her confidence that very night, and give her a hint as to the line of action that would further the cause. So when the game was over and Mr. Grant had taken his leave, she gathered up her work and called Cicely to her.

"Let us walk in the orchard," she said; "I have something to tell you." And there she disclosed all her hopes and plans. "We can see she likes him, and I'm sure he's always with her."

"Is he?" said Cicely faintly. "I thought Mr. Grant——"

"Oh dear no! You have no eyes, my dear. Why, only the other day he said to me—— But here he is"—as Reginald came in through the gate. "Cicely and I were having a little chat."

"It's chilly to be out without a wrap," he said, looking at the girl. "Let me bring you one."

"No, thanks," she said quickly, "I am going in."

Kingscote looked after her as she went with a perplexed face, and half-turned to overtake her.

"Come for one more round, Reggie?" said his mother, slipping her arm through his.

"What's wrong with Cicely?" he asked, presently.

"Nothing, dear."

"But there was."

"Oh! I think not. Do you know," after a pause, "I quite look forward to seeing her settle near us; it would be so nice."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, Mr. Grant is sure to get the living."

"Go in, mother mine," said Kingscote; "it's getting cold. I'll be in when I have had a weed."

"What a funny, abrupt boy you are," said his mother, looking up at him fondly. "Don't stay out in the dew; you look quite white already," and she rustled off.

Kingscote stood still, staring at the ground, and mechanically turning over the coins in his pocket. So Cicely was going to marry Grant! Dear little Cis—marry somebody else? it seemed impossible. They had always been as brother and sister until the last year or so, and he had thought a hundred times since then of asking her to marry him; but they were so much together, and Cis seemed so happy as they were, and, besides, he had not yet been called to the Bar—all these things put it off, but only for a time; now it was too

late. Grant had seen her every day of the year, whereas he only saw her at Christmas and summer, and, of course, she—— Great heavens! how lonely it was! And there would be no excuse for getting away until the end of August. Anyway, Grant was an awfully decent fellow; he could not grudge him anything—but this.

When he went in the rest were in the drawing-room; Beatrix was at the piano, and called him to turn over for her. As he crossed the room he looked at Cicely, but she would not meet his eyes for the first time in their life, and as he stood by Trix he wondered why she had avoided his glance. Did she know he loved her? Heaven knows, she must have seen it often enough in his face! Well, now that he knew how things were, he would not annoy her with his attentions. When Cicely did look up from her book, she found Mrs. Kingscote trying to attract her attention by waving a skein of flame-coloured silk, and when their eyes met, the good lady nodded with enthusiastic significance in the direction of the pair at the piano.

Cicely tried to smile in return, but it was a poor attempt. She had long known that Kingscote was more to her than any one on earth, and it was dreary work smiling congratulations on his devotion to another. Not that she could see any devotion—she told herself that; but then what if he had taken his mother into his confidence?

Mrs. Kingscote sat up later than the rest, smiling to herself as she built castles in the air, and sent her gleaming needle in and out like a benign and portly fate placidly working out a destiny for short-sighted mortals.

The next day the barrier which had begun to grow between Cicely and Kingscote had assumed proportions such as might have been the work of years, and in a few more days they had quite learnt their parts, and played to each other with apparent ease; only each knew how hard it was, and how it hurt. Kingscote's part was that of the not too affectionate brother, and he treated Cicely with a cold familiarity that passed muster excellently well. Cicely was the better actor of the two, though she suffered more—for the iron enters deeper into a woman's soul, if she is a good one—and she assumed the rôle of candid good-fellowship, which was the harder to play, because it used to come naturally; and so, for a time, they deceived every one but themselves.

Mr. Grant was away for this week, but Trix reminded them of him occasionally by putting a collar of white paper on Kismet, the old black cat. "Be good, and I'll dress you like my big clergyman," she'd whisper in Kismet's disreputable ear, frayed with fights; and then she danced him on his hindlegs and introduced him as the curate. She saw a good deal of Kingscote just then, who avoided Cicely as much as possible; and Cicely, looking on, thought it was quite natural that they should be together, and tried to cultivate unselfishness to an extent she had never tried before.

Mrs. Kingscote, blissfully unconscious of the cause, noted that Reginald sought Trix out more than he used, and congratulated herself and Cicely. "How thankful we ought to be that things are going on so well," she would say, plying her needle as usual.

Trix found Cicely and Reginald but poor company all that time, and confided more than once to the weather-beaten Kismet that she wanted her big clergyman back again. When he came, as it happened, she was the first to meet him. He overtook her in the wood when he was taking a short cut to the Grange. She saw him coming and turned away to hide the blush she felt rising. He made no disguise of his joy at meeting her, but hurried forward with his eyes blazing boldly all he felt. She greeted him casually, without offering him her hand, and scolded him directly for standing on a tiny wild flower she declared she was going to pluck.

Disappointment sent all the light out of his honest eyes, and he stooped humbly to gather the crushed floweret.

"I'm afraid it is spoiled," he said, looking at it doubtfully.

"Of course it is; you may throw it away. And it is the only one daisy I have seen this year," she added dejectedly. Grant looked so abjectly repentant that she relented suddenly: "Dear, stupid old goose, he thinks I'm angry with him," she said to herself. Then aloud: "Never mind, I'll forgive you. Come on, or we'll miss tea."

Grant strode by her side in silence, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, while Trix glanced up at him from time to time as she chatted and laughed without waiting for an answer. They were almost at the edge of the wood when he laid his great hand lightly, and even reverently, on her arm, and if she had looked up at his face then they might have understood each other in time. But she was afraid to raise

her eyes until he would speak; when he had told her what she knew he would, then it would be easy; and she stood, trembling a little, unconscious of her burning cheeks, only listening for his voice. When he spoke again his voice was deeper, but as musical and as quiet as ever.

"I want to tell you——"

"Is that you, Beatrix?" broke in Mrs. Kingscote's voice through the trees. "I can see your hat; I knew you by the way you do your hair. Wasn't I clever?" she shouted. "I'll join you in a moment, the paths cross on here," and a vision of a bonnet of steel-coloured beads hung with jet, looking like a helmet cut down and fitted up as a bonnet, flitted through the trees.

At the first sound Trix snatched away her arm and walked on.

"I must see you—alone," said Grant in a low voice. "When?"

"I don't know. To-morrow."

"Here, at this time?"

"Perhaps!"

"I was sure it was you," cried Mrs. Kingscote, appearing where her path found theirs. "And Mr. Grant! So glad to see you back."

"I was going to the Grange," said Grant composedly. And they continued the way together.

Mrs. Kingscote entertained them until they reached the house, and throughout tea-time, with a description of some new people she had been to see, whom she euphemistically described as "very pleasant, and all that, but not quite—quite, you know!"

The curate had to go almost immediately, and Mrs. Kingscote took Trix's arm in a sweet motherly way, that would have shown to such as knew her that she was up to one of her "little games." To tell the truth, she had seen more than Trix's hat, by stooping to peer through a friendly laurel bush, and she felt it her Christian duty now to put her spoke in Fortune's wheel, which seemed to have taken a turn not to her liking.

"The man's making love as sure as I'm looking at him," she had murmured, and that of course was not to be endured. So when she led Trix away in sweet converse, she told her she had something to say to her in confidence. "I think I ought to tell you, my dear," she purred. "I'm afraid from the expression on Mr. Grant's face when I met you that he was being a bit sentimental." Trix recoiled. "Perhaps I'm wrong," she added, interpreting the movement to suit her tactics, "but, anyway, you ought to know that he is as good as engaged to Cicely. You needn't look like that. Cicely and he are old friends enough to understand each other thoroughly, and, of course, they are not demonstrative. But I just thought, you know—he lives so much in the country that, and quite naturally, too, he might have taken a fancy—a passing thing, of course—to you. You are so different to Cicely, you know, so taking"—"(As if I were the scarlatina, or something," thought Trix)—"that you would have a great charm for a man like him. But I know you will not interfere with dear Cicely's happiness, now that you see how things are. Run off now and dress for dinner, and don't be angry if I have made a mistake. You know dearest Cicely is like my own daughter," and she playfully pushed the girl away.

Trix did run away, and was barely in her room in time to hide the scalding tears that chased each other down her cheeks. She saw nothing but truth in what Mrs. Kingscote said; she had never felt worthy of him, and it had often seemed impossible that he, with his great noble heart, could love her who had flirted more or less with every man she met.

Poor little Trix! It was the first time real love had taken hold of her life, and then it took such a hold that life seemed a new thing with it—and nothing without it—and this, only to find that she was spoiling another's happiness; nay, what was worse, likely to spoil the happiness of the man she worshipped with all the self-abandonment of a woman who knows her weakness for a man she knows to be strong! She saw the truth of all Mrs. Kingscote had said. Cicely was just the sort of girl his nature could love and respect. How could he respect her when he knew her as she knew herself? It was easy to see how a passing fancy for her could have taken hold of him; for she had, from mere habit at first, done her best to win his admiration, and a man as genuine in every thought and deed as he was would be slow to find out what was shallow in her. She thanked Heaven that chance had prevented his speaking to her in the wood; for she knew he would have asked her to marry him, and she knew she would have said "Yes"; and afterwards, when he learnt what she really was, he would compare her with Cicely, and find his life undone. How could she forgive herself for weaning him

away from Cicely? She had very nearly made them both unhappy through her selfish vanity; thank Heaven, she knew the truth in time to spare them, though it was to hurt herself with a hurt that could never be whole.

The next day was spent in feverish anxiety. The hours seemed to drag each more slowly than the last, for she wished that the ordeal she had set herself to go through were over, full of fear lest her resolution would desert her.

At length the time came when she had promised to meet Grant. She had only said "perhaps," but she knew that he would be waiting. Kingscote offered to carry the basket and trowel she took, but she told him it would be much kinder if he stayed at home and kept Cicely company, at which he gave her a look she could not understand.

Grant was at the trysting spot when she came, and greeted her more quietly even than usual; only his eyes showed her how hard a task she had to do.

"I'm glad you've come," she said, as saucily as she could, "I want some one to carry my basket."

"I shall carry it, then," he said, smiling; "but I must tell you now, what I began to——"

"Shouldn't advise you if it's a secret," turning aside to dig up a young fern; "the wood is full of paths."

"I must tell you now," he said, in a low voice that trembled with feeling.

"I tell you this place has no more privacy than—than a rookery. You had better not talk secrets now."

Grant looked at her in perplexity. Would he ever understand her? She felt his eyes on her and stooped again to the mossy bank with the trowel, but her eyes were blinded with tears and she knew she must give in. Grant watched in silence until a great drop fell on the little brown hand that grasped the fern shoot.

"Miss L'Estrange!" he cried, "Trix! You are crying," and flinging away the basket he was holding, he stretched out his hands, infinite tenderness in every line of his strong face.

"Well, if I am?" she said defiantly, standing up and viciously drying her hand on her jacket. "I suppose I can if I like?"

"For Heaven's sake be serious; let yourself be serious. What is the matter?"

"You made me cry," she sobbed.

"I? I who love you with all my strength!"

"No, you don't. You only think you do."

"For Heaven's sake do not jest," he cried in agony.

"I mean it," she forced herself to say. "If you knew me, really you wouldn't. I made you, on purpose."

"Why?"

"I always do."

The strong man drew a quick breath that sounded like a sob, and his teeth showed white between his trembling lips. Trix daren't look at him in the pause that followed, but kept her face buried in her hands. At length he spoke in a low, trembling voice:

"I see how it is. I am sorry I distressed you. I would to Heaven you could care for me. I shall go now. Heaven bless you—dear!"

She could play the part no longer. Without turning round she stretched out her left hand to him in mute appeal, still hiding her eyes in the other, and oh, the joy when she felt his strong clasp close on it.

"Yes, yes!" he said, kissing it pitifully, "I forgive you. Could I do else?"

And it was not until his footsteps died away that Trix realised that he had not understood.

CHAPTER II.

Surely it is a great and good gift from on high that grants to some natures an intensity of feeling that lesser souls cannot comprehend; and when joys are in the way such as these drink deeper draughts than others. But when sorrow comes which would we be? For the same gift becomes a capability for suffering of which lesser natures know nothing. They but taste the bitter cup; these must drink to the dregs.

Anthony Grant was a man whose whole individuality lay in his intensity of feeling, and his love for Beatrix L'Estrange was the greatest thing that had come into his life. Such men as he can love a woman with the ideal love that lives not here alone, but must go on, "out into the dream beyond," and this was how he loved Trix. To destroy this was to destroy half his life. His first feelings after the daze of pain had gone were not of resentment—there was none of that. They were of great pity for her. He understood, or thought he understood, how she had never thought he would become really fond of her, and even upbraided himself for his stupidity in taking all she had done and said since

they met so seriously. He told himself that if he were more used to the ways of women he might have seen that she did not really care for him; other men in his place would probably have known that. So he went about his work as usual, but determined to avoid the Grange, thinking more of Trix than of himself.

And what of Trix? Nobody could understand her during those days—even Mrs. Kingscote was at a loss. She was as merry sometimes as ever, planning excursions and parties, and was the very life of them all; but sometimes she was so sad and quiet that Cicely wondered if she missed Kingscote, who had left his home on some excuse.

Meanwhile, Grant never called, and Trix, knowing the cause of his absence, felt that she still stood in the way of Cicely's happiness, and was angry with him for keeping away, though she dreaded their meeting. She pondered deeply how she might put him at ease when he did come, so that she would not frighten him away any longer. She daren't try to flirt, even ever so harmlessly, for, in the first place, she couldn't trust herself, and, in the second, she would be ashamed. Moreover, a display of sisterly affection and kindly feeling wouldn't do; she knew men too well to think that. And she couldn't meet him in the ordinary way, for she must give herself some part to act that would serve as a cloak of refuge for her real feelings; so there seemed nothing left but to quarrel with him. And this she determined to do. She knew that, with all his breadth of thought, he was staunchly loyal to the tradition of the Church, and this, as well as his keen patriotism, offered a fair field for encounter.

He did come in a week or so, and was received by Mrs. Kingscote and Cicely; but the former soon hastened off with a great show of business that signified nothing.

Trix came into the room without knowing Grant was there. She felt the blood rush to her face, but collected herself with an effort, so that she might not make the meeting harder for him. He greeted her perfectly calmly, however, and she was annoyed to find that she felt it most. She thought he would change colour, and perhaps be silent, but it was she who did both; he was perfectly natural, though perhaps a little grave.

Chagrin at her own discomfiture was a useful tonic to Trix, and in a minute she was chatting and laughing almost in the old way. She could act better than he, and soon it was his turn to wonder at her sang-froid, when he remembered her as he last saw her. Her gaiety jarred on him, for, as Trix had thought, he was too genuine himself to hastily set others down as insincere; and he went away more than ever convinced of the heartlessness she had accused herself of.

After that Trix was in worse spirits than ever, and the seasons of gaiety disappeared altogether. She found his seeming indifference harder than anything else. She knew that what she wished—or perhaps only wished she wished—was that he should forget his fancied attachment to her, and be true to Cicely; yet, at the first sign of such a state of things, she felt a new pain which was not without a tinge of resentment. She despised herself at first for such a want of purpose, and wondered if she were ever so selfish; for she was fully convinced that Grant did not, could never, really care for her as she felt it was in him to love, and it seemed a crime to wish him still bound by chains which in time he fain would break. Yet she wished it all the same, and decided that the exalted ideal of love that is all unselfishness was not hers. And perhaps she was right.

Her low spirits, which continued after Kingscote came back, troubled Cicely more and more, and if he had ever caught the look of pained yearning in those dark grey eyes, he must have sought the cause and found—everything.

So these four people suffered, each one striving more or less after a noble unselfishness that need not be, and only destroying each other's happiness by sacrificing their own. Only Mrs. Kingscote, the prime cause and fountain-head of it all, still went her way in serene complacency, and wrought with a chaste industry at the evergrowing Destiny. Supremely unconscious of the troubled times she lived in, she saw signs only of the happy issue of events. Her son's moodiness had not escaped her, but that only showed that a disturbing influence had come into his life, and her puce silk swelled with triumph and all the emotions of a mother at such a crisis.

She never doubted for a moment that this was "a maiden passion for a maid," and of course the maid was Beatrix. Who else could it be? Now were all her hopes to be realised, and that right early.

"We may congratulate ourselves," she chirped confidentially to Cicely. "I'm sure

there's no mistake what's come over dear Reggie."

"Do you think she cares for him?" queried Cicely as casually as she could.

"Well, until quite lately I really thought she didn't," lowering her voice as if awed by the incredibility of the idea; "but I think it is all right now. Beatrix has quite changed. Who could help liking dear Reggie?" she added, with all the prejudice that makes our mothers believe that we are superior to all other women's sons. We like it, though we know it is not true; they like it because they are sure it is.

Cicely thought that Mrs. Kingscote was too sanguine, and, mentally reviewing Trix's manner of late, came to the conclusion that she did not care for Reginald—yet; but she, too, believed it hard that any one could help doing so.

It was about this time that Trix took to quarrelling with Grant. He tried to avoid it at first, but soon realising the perfect safety in the proceeding, indulged himself thus much, as it was the only passport to her society he would allow himself, and even though her petulant accusations against many things which were sacred to him jarred inexpressibly, yet she was too dear to him to drop out of his life all at once.

He soon began to look forward to these encounters. So did Trix; and she always had something ready, some gauntlet to fling down which he was ever eager to pick up, and he broke many a lance for Church and State.

Cicely saw this with troubled eyes. It was hard to give up Reginald, but it was made infinitely harder when she had to see him losing his chance of happiness too, for she knew that Trix sought and enjoyed her battles with the curate.

"Why are you always squabbling with Mr. Grant?" she asked her at last.

"Good for him," was the laconic answer.

"Have you his welfare so much at heart, then?"

"Oh, no!" cried Trix, with the haste of conscious guilt. "I really don't care—much. Of course, he's very nice," she added apologetically, "and I respect him, you know; but——"

"Have you given up making him flirt?"

"Long ago; I have indeed, Cis," earnestly. "Besides, I couldn't teach him."

"No, I shouldn't think so," Cicely said quietly, and Beatrix thought what a perfect faith she had in him.

Cicely believed what Trix told her, and thought that Kingscote might still be successful if he tried to win. She hardly knew whether this made her more or less sad. She would wish that she could put his happiness before anything else; but the knowledge that Trix was still free for him was not of unmixed pleasure.

He chanced to join her that night in the garden, where everything was sleeping in the soft starlight except the nightingales and the drowsy perfumes of the flowers. They had hardly been alone together once since the night, three weeks ago, of their interview with Mrs. Kingscote in the orchard.

They walked to and fro in silence. Kingscote wished he had strength to go away, for the fairy charm of the summer was stealing over him, and he felt the temptation to plead his cause with the girl at his side was taking possession of him.

Cicely was all in white, and had drawn a soft, white wrap over her head which she held at her throat with one hand.

Kingscote paced moodily up and down, and she could see how pale he was even in the dim starlight. Her heart ached for him, and she steeled herself to tell him what Trix had confessed. It would be pain, but what harm if it smoothed the sad lines away that had come in his face of late? To do that was all the joy left her. But he wouldn't speak, and she did not know how to begin.

At last she took courage.

"You are troubled about something; don't be angry; I can't help noticing it."

"Yes," he said slowly, without raising his eyes, "I have been a bit bothered; I suppose there's no use denying it."

"None; but perhaps," said Cicely, clenching her hands in the dark in the effort to steady her voice—"perhaps I can—help you."

Kingscote started.

"No, you can't," he said quickly; "nobody can."

"I think I can. I think—I know—what it is."

"You do?" said he, stopping to look at her.

"Yes," she faltered, turning her head away. "Isn't it——"

"I will tell you," he said, with an effort to be calm. "Though you know already, let me tell you now—myself. It is all——"

"Cicely! Are you mad? With this dew falling! Come in, come in!" and

Mrs. Kingscote bustled across the grass and bore her off.

"I'm glad I was spared that," she thought, shuddering. "I could not have listened to the story of his love for her. It would be too great torture."

And Kingscote, left standing alone in the night, muttered: "She knows it, then —knows I love her, and wanted to say something kind to me. Dear little girl! Heaven bless her!"

He went up to town next day, saying he would not be back till Saturday.

"Some little trinket for Beatrix, I suppose," said his mother delightedly to Cicely, and she worked in two new shades of silk.

Trix found the day very long; Kingscote was away, Cicely writing letters, and Mrs. Kingscote would talk only of the prospect of Cicely and the curate, or enumerate Reginald's good points. Now, the first of these subjects was gall to drink, and as for the second, when a woman is altogether interested in one man, a catalogue of the virtues of another is but Lenten fare. So she called all the dogs, who came rejoicing, and started aimlessly for a walk.

She soon found herself turning towards the place in the wood where she had met Grant, and changed the direction at once; but it was only to come to it by a longer path. She stood once more where she had stood with him, and where she had stretched out her hand to him to bring him to her. How plainly it all was burnt in on her memory! He had stood there; he had rested his arm on that tree when he began to talk. There was the spot where she had stooped with the trowel to hide her tears, before they became too many to be hidden. A little blue flower that had bloomed there hung withered now. She wondered if her scalding tears had fallen on it and killed it.

And the tears were beginning to come again when the dogs announced, in various keys, that some step was approaching. Then they charged the new-comer with a brave show of chivalry, but finding it was only the curate, they saluted him hastily and raced back to tell their mistress.

He greeted her gently, as usual, and talked of every-day things for a while, then raised his hat and continued his way. But before he had gone a dozen paces he turned back as if by some irresistible impulse, and stood looking down on her.

"I cannot help it," he said, almost sadly, "I must ask you: Is it the same answer? Am I nothing to you still?"

She felt his eyes on her, and dared not look up. The struggle was terrible. Why not give in, take what happiness she could? Even if he had loved Cicely, could she not make him forget her, and though his love might die when he had learned how unworthy she was of him, yet would it not be worth it?

"Why do you torture me?" she cried, wrestling with her love.

"Forgive me!" he said; and left her.

She remained standing there after he had gone trying to see that it was better that he should have misunderstood her again, and that all she had suffered for in the past three weeks had not been undone by a moment's weakness; for if he had known the anguish that made her cry out, and had pleaded his cause, or even drawn a step nearer, she felt she must have surrendered.

She dried the tears that hung heavy on her lashes with a childish gesture, rubbing first one and then the other with the back of her wrist, and when she raised her tear-stained face it looked so pale and sad that Ginger, who was wagging his stumpy tail slowly, stopped suddenly and stood with it twisted round at an absurd angle.

"Dear little dog," she said, stooping to kiss his black muzzle, "you are sorry, aren't you?"

Then the others crowded up with condolences, and when they had all been caressed, in the fulness of their joy, they pretended Sancho was a rabbit and hunted him home, arriving there twenty minutes before Trix.

The next day was Sunday — the last Sunday that the house-party would be together. Mrs. Kingscote was about to begin her annual round of visits which would last till the autumn, and was taking Cicely with her; Trix was going home, and Kingscote had begun to look up rods and guns.

The Grange pew was empty in the morning, to the dismay of sundry ladies who relied on it for the fashions. But it was fully occupied in the evening, when the golden sun streamed in through the open door, and the blackbird's song filled every pause in the service.

The spell of the coming parting lay on them, and Grant's deep voice trembled at the last words that dismissed his little congregation. When he came out of the vestry, in cap and cassock, everybody was gone, and he turned sadly homewards. He had half hoped to see Trix even for a

moment; and though it was forced in on him that it would be better if they never met again—so hopeless was he for himself and full of pity for her—yet that could not drive away the awful sense of loneliness with which he sought the tiny house he called his own. But before he had gone a score of paces he remembered the sexton's little child that lay ill in the cottage by the church, and he retraced his steps with a lighter heart; for to bring comfort to those in trouble or need was always a joy to him.

He went in through the little green gate, and up the flagged path between the neatly clipped borders of box. The door stood open and he went in without knocking, assured of the welcome he had earned long since. He stood, hat in hand, inside the door—he had to stoop his great height to pass through—and looked across to where the sick child lay in an old arm-chair, his wan little face lit by the last lingering rays of the setting sun. And there, kneeling by his side, was the woman who would have him believe she was selfish and altogether heartless. She was putting flowers in a cracked mug that the child held in his little hands, smiling up at him as she told him how she had gathered them for him, her great brown eyes shining bright with the soft brightness of tender sympathy.

The curate stood still, loth to destroy the picture; but she was conscious of his presence immediately, for his big frame darkened all the little room, and she looked up without moving.

It was only the glance of a moment, but he saw in those soft eyes all that had seemed wanting in her before, all the infinite pity and tenderness which is Nature's dowry of a good woman. From that moment he knew that the girl he loved was not what she would have him believe, and that she could not have dealt so with him, to win his love for amusement alone.

There must be something between them that he did not know, and he vowed he would know it that night. He spoke to the child, and then chatted with the mother, who hovered about in raptures at the kindness of the "fine Lunnon lady" to her sick child.

When Trix rose to go he stood up too, and, bidding the good people good night, left the cottage with her. She was going by a path that skirted the wood—a short cut to the Grange, she said—and would have parted from him there, but he asked to go a part of the way with her, and Trix was glad.

For some time they walked in silence. Grant kept his eyes bent on the ground, wondering how he could say what he wanted without giving her pain, for her cry to him of the day before still rang in his ears. Trix was silent, and wished the distance were ten times as long as it was.

"I want to ask you something," he said at last, without lifting his eyes. Trix's heart gave a great bound, whether of joy or dread she never knew. "You go away in a day or so," he went on, with the vibration which is so pathetic in a strong man's voice, "and I cannot let you pass out of my life—you who made it so sweet to me—for a while." She cast a look entreating for mercy. "Forgive me if I pain you, but I cannot let you go until I know the truth."

"I told you," she said piteously, "I tried to make you fond of me at first."

"And you knew—you must have known I loved you afterwards," he said, stopping in his earnestness. Trix stood silently by him. "And yet you did not send me away, you even let me think—— For Heaven's sake don't cry—darling. I am not reproaching you. I would not have foregone that time even if I could have foreseen everything. But you are not as heartless as you pretend. I don't believe you could be cruel; I don't believe it. What is it? What is between us?"

"You know—you know!"

"I know nothing. Tell me, and end this!"

"You know you mustn't like me when you loved Cicely long ago," she cried, as if the words were wrung from her by pain.

"I? I didn't! Oh, Trix, it is not true. I never loved any woman but you—you!"

"Then you really——?"

"No, I never did. I love you," taking her hands. "And you?——Dearest!" . . .

Later she said:

"Come with me to the edge of the wood—Tony," and they went together in the growing light of the moon.

When they reached the open the sound of voices came to their ears, and presently Mrs. Kingscote appeared with Cicely and Kingscote. She hurried forward to meet them as they stepped from the shadow of the trees.

"Here you are at last. And Mr. Grant, I declare! How is that poor child? Indeed I've been intending to go and see it all the summer, but there never was a moment. But you are very late, my dear; R-ggie was quite anxious. Nothing's wrong?"

Trix stood very close to Grant, and softly pinched his arm under the cover of dusk. It was the tiniest pinch, but he understood.

"Nothing is wrong, indeed. On the contrary, Miss L'Estrange has promised to be my wife."

"Beatrix! But you—surely—— I mean —Reggie——" and she turned in helpless amazement to the others, who stood behind.

But as the curate finished, Kingscote and Cicely had involuntarily looked full in each other's eyes, and in that one glance by the light of the moon they read the truth. He stretched his hand out in silence, and in silence she took it and held it close. So, when his mother turned to him in her confusion, he said quietly:

"And Cicely is going to be mine."

"And indeed," said Mrs. Kingscote afterwards to the Vicar's wife, "I was so upset that I put my crewel work away somewhere that night, and I don't know what became of it. I never found it since, and I was getting on so well. I wish I could have finished it!"

THE FATE OF A FLIRT.

By E. L. PHILLIMORE.

CHAPTER I.

"I SHOULD really be quite good-looking," said Lesbia, pensively regarding herself in the glass, "if it were only not for my nose! There is so much of the Jew about it. It is really very unfortunate."

She stroked that somewhat Roman feature as she spoke reflectively, regarding it sideways this time by means of a small hand-glass.

"There's no smoothing it down—or rather up," she went on; "the curve at the end is too hopelessly pronounced for anything. There is no doubt that my profile does not suit me at all. It's so horsey somehow. What do you say, Jenny?"

Jenny, who was sitting on the floor tailor-fashion engaged in sewing together an enormous tear in her cotton frock, replied without looking up:

"But it is too thick, Lesbia. That betokens a certain coarseness of disposition, you know."

"How brutally frank you are, Jenny," said Lesbia, turning away from the mirror with a disgusted air. "I don't believe it is so bad, after all. At any rate, looking at it seems to make it worse."

"Have you ever asked Frank Gilroy what he thought about it?" asked Jenny, industriously stitching away.

"Good gracious, no! It is the aim and object of my life to keep him from thinking that I have a nose at all. I should certainly be mortally offended if he ever referred to it."

"Perhaps he admires it," said Jenny hopefully.

"Well, people in love have very odd tastes," allowed Lesbia, "but that doesn't make things any more satisfactory to me. It isn't Frank who suffers from nose."

She went to the window and flung it wide open, leaning out as far as she could to gather a piece of the trailing honeysuckle that threw its arms all over the warm red walls of the house.

"Do you know," she went on, after she had secured an artistic spray, and was busy fastening it in her slender waistband, "I am not at all sure that I like Frank Gilroy well enough to marry him."

"Isn't it rather a pity to come to that conclusion only six weeks before the wedding day?" said Jenny with sarcastic severity.

She had finished her mending and was still sitting Turk-fashion on the floor. But this time she was looking at Lesbia.

"It is a great deal better than finding it out six weeks after the wedding," said Lesbia with an elderly air. "I sometimes feel that I have made a mistake."

"Frank is very fond of you," said Jenny, tossing back a mane of tawny hair, and gazing at her black-browed sister more scrutinisingly than ever.

"Oh, that—yes," said Lesbia scornfully, "but that isn't all I want. I am sometimes afraid that Frank is too inclined to take me lightly—as a sort of joke, in fact. He never talks really seriously to me. If I do break it off——"

"Goodness gracious, Lesbia, you would never be so mad! Whatever would papa say?"

"He would be a great deal madder, no doubt," returned Lesbia serenely. "He is delighted that one of his daughters is to marry Mr. Gilroy of Harewood Grange. He only thinks of the fact that Frank is very rich, and that I shall henceforth walk in silk attire instead of making my own cotton frocks. But I look at things in a different light, and just now I don't feel sure that I love Frank. I wish I could tell."

Jenny got up and began to collect her

belongings—cotton, scissors, thimble, and various scraps of different coloured prints—in the lap of her frock, which she held up for the purpose.

"Frank is coming here to-night," she said curiously. "Shall you ask him?"

"Ask him what?"

"Whether you love him or not. He ought to know if anybody does."

"Dear me, child, what strange ideas you have!" said Lesbia, who was aged twenty-one years. "It is because you are so young, I suppose. Nobody could ask a man such a question as that. I shall find out for myself somehow, I dare say."

"I think Frank is very nice, and awfully good to you," said Jenny loyally. "My only objection to him is his beard. You can never tell what a man with a beard is like. He may have no chin, or an under lip that sticks out, or something of that kind. It is so deceptive."

"Not that nice pointed Charles the First type," said Lesbia contradictorily. "I always think it looks like one of Vandyck's pictures."

"Well, there is the dressing-bell," said Jenny, preparing to leave the room. "I do wish papa would not insist on late dinner and all that fuss when we have hardly a rag to put on. Of course, eating one's dinner at eight o'clock seems to keep one in touch with rich people, but I'd rather have less ceremony and more pudding."

After Jenny went, Lesbia crossed over to the glass once more and critically regarded herself. She was certainly handsome, in a rich, dark, Oriental fashion. But that nose! She gave it a last despairing stroke as she went downstairs.

After dinner, which was served with all the delicate nicety that Colonel Dixon's soul loved, they went out to sit on the stone terrace, where the flags were hardly even yet cool after the intense heat of the day. There was still a lingering glory of sunset in the sky, though a pale crescent moon was rising, fair and youthful, in the purple vault. Lesbia remarked upon its beauty.

"Yes, yes," said her father, rather irritably, "it's very pretty, I dare say. But I am past that sort of thing, my dear. You must talk it over with Gilroy. I have no doubt that you and he could admire it for hours."

"Frank isn't in the least sentimental," said Lesbia with a sigh.

"So much the better, then."

"I don't think so. He is too frightfully matter-of-fact for anything."

"I know he is going to behave in a very handsome way about the settlements," said Colonel Dixon, "and that is a great deal better than making love by moonlight."

At this juncture Mr. Gilroy himself appeared. He was a tall, handsome man, with a fair, pointed beard, and a pair of deep blue eyes, which, when they rested upon Lesbia, became rather quizzical in their expression.

"Hullo, Gilroy, glad to see you!" said the Colonel, stretching out a lazy hand to his guest. "Here is Lesbia pining for the sight of you."

"Are you, Lesbia?" said Frank Gilroy, sitting down on a bamboo lounging-chair opposite her, after having previously pressed a somewhat limp hand.

"I was just saying that you did not care for sunsets," rejoined Lesbia without looking at him, "and papa, with his usual vivid imagination, has construed that into a desire for your presence."

"Lesbia is in a mood to-night," said her father, with a slight laugh. "I think I will leave you to combat it single-handed, while I go indoors and see why Parker doesn't bring the coffee."

"Where is Jenny?" said Gilroy, who betrayed no violent desire to be alone with the lady of his heart.

"She's gone over to the Seymours. I told her she wasn't to go—but I might as well tell a cat not to mew. I can't do anything with either of my girls, Gilroy. It is to be hoped you will have more influence over Lesbia than I have ever had."

Lesbia's lip curled slightly as her father disappeared in at the French windows which led into the drawing-room. Her lover regarded her more quizzically than ever.

"Something put you out?" he demanded airily.

"Put me out? Certainly not," said Lesbia. "What is there to put me out?"

"I don't mean extinguished, you know," said Gilroy in pleasant explanation, "nothing could ever put you out in that way, I should say. I meant ruffled."

Lesbia fixed her eyes on the rising moon, and tried to curb her growing irritability. She made no reply to his speech.

"It's awfully hot," went on Frank Gilroy after a little pause; "one might as well be on a gridiron as on this terrace. Let us walk about for a bit."

Lesbia rose, with the air of a martyr who sees the faggots being piled round him at the stake, and they strolled up and down for some time together in silence.

"I'm going to bring over a friend of mine to-morrow," said Gilroy, "if I may. He's staying with me for a couple of weeks. I think you'll like him—Blake, the artist."

"Oh, pray bring him by all means," said Lesbia with a slight yawn, "he may liven us up, perhaps."

"I shouldn't call him a lively bird myself," said Gilroy carelessly. "I want him to come over here to paint your portrait."

Lesbia stopped for a moment to smell a damask-hearted rose before she answered him.

"What do you want my portrait painted for?" she asked rather indifferently.

"Because I am fond of you, I suppose. I can't think of any other reason," said Gilroy, in his most matter-of-fact tone.

"I won't have it taken side-face," said Lesbia with great eagerness, her listlessness dropping from her like a garment. "I would rather not be painted at all."

"Why not side-face?" said Gilroy good-humouredly, turning to survey her in the half-light. "What is the matter with your side-face?"

"Oh, nothing particular, only I don't like profiles," said Lesbia hastily.

"But I do," said Gilroy placidly.

Lesbia said nothing for a moment. Then she spoke rather bitterly:

"I don't think we have a single taste in common, Frank."

"No?" Gilroy turned his blue eyes upon her. "Not a liking for jam tarts? We first met over a jam tart, remember, Lesbia."

Lesbia did remember. It was at a picnic, and they had disputed gaily over a piece of damaged pastry. Later on he had come to call upon her father.

"Yes, it was a jam tart that brought us together," repeated Gilroy serenely. "Do you remember how sodden it was? A soda-water bottle had——"

"Why ever do you trouble to talk about that stupid picnic?" cried Lesbia crossly. "I only remember how wet it was and how miserable."

"Yes. We sat under a hedge that leaked horribly, and imagined it was a kind of shelter! I began to fall in love with you when you were so firm about refusing that ham. You have a truly Jewish aversion to pork, Lesbia."

But the word "Jewish" was an unfortunate one, and Lesbia became crosser than ever.

"I'm sure I don't know why we ever met," she said petulantly. "We are not a bit suited to each other."

Gilroy took out his cigarette-case and struck a match.

"Have you been feeling like this long?" he asked in the respectful tone of one who seeks for information on a subject which is at present dark to him.

"Much longer than you think," said Lesbia with dignity.

Gilroy threw away the match, and put the cigarette between his teeth.

"That's a pity," was his sole remark.

Lesbia came to a standstill with a stamp of her foot.

"You don't understand me in the least," she cried impatiently. "I can't think why I ever said I would marry you! You always treat me as a joke, and never as if I were a rational being at all. I can tell you I am getting tired of it. You had better not try it too far."

Gilroy did not look at her as he replied:

"Don't you think that some things are best treated as jokes? This conversation, for instance? I shouldn't care to take it seriously myself."

"I don't care how seriously you take it," said Lesbia, moving away from him, "and as for your painter-person, I shall refuse to see him."

Later, when Jenny had returned, Gilroy captured her and demanded why Lesbia was in such a temper. Jenny shook her head at him reprovingly.

"It was very stupid of you to suggest that she should be painted in profile," she said; "you know how sensitive Lesbia is about her nose."

But Gilroy, instead of being properly abashed, stared at her for a moment, and then burst into a fit of laughter. He had entirely recovered his good-humour.

"It is more serious than you think," said Jenny crushingly, as she bade him good night.

CHAPTER II.

THE breath of August lay over all the land. The earth, cracked and baked with the vivid sunshine, waited thirstily for the rain that never came. In the cornfields, ripe and glowing, gleamed masses of scarlet poppies; the scent of hay was in the air. The Manor House looked provokingly cool on such a day as this, with its white muslin curtains and shady rooms. Lesbia and Jenny looked cool too, in their simple white gowns. Gilroy declared that the Manor House was the only place in the neighbourhood in which it was possible to draw the breath of life.

Lesbia's portrait had been begun. A little ashamed of the ill-temper she had shown on the subject of the "painter-person," she had been amiable enough to him when Gilroy, to whom her fits of temper never made any difference, brought him over to see her on the day he had originally appointed for the purpose.

Rupert Blake had been enthusiastic at once, and Lesbia had caught some of his enthusiasm. She was to be painted sitting in the great old garden under a shady tree, with a background of old-fashioned flowers —lupins, and snapdragons, and white and gold lilies, and the purple "love-lies-bleeding." She was to wear her everyday frock, and her garden-hat was to have a wreath of scarlet poppies round it.

Jenny hovered about, slightly disapproving of the new element which was being introduced into the Manor House, and which was henceforth to have easy access there. She expressed dislike to Rupert Blake's velveteen coat and large, mild eyes. She declared that he wore his hair too long, and that his figure always reminded her of a weeping willow.

After the first week of sittings Lesbia defended him with suspicious energy.

"At any rate," she said with dignity, "Mr. Blake has got a soul, which Frank certainly has not. He is a thorough artist and a most cultivated man."

"You think he has a soul because he spouts poetry to you and flatters you," said Jenny shrewdly; "but Frank is worth a dozen of him any day. I hate the very sight of Rupert Blake, and I am not coming to any more of these silly sittings. I can't think how you can bear the creature near you."

Lesbia flushed a little. She felt that she was misunderstood. She gave Mr. Blake a sitting that very afternoon. It was the eighth, and everybody knows that when a woman has sat to a man eight times they are either very good friends or very bitter enemies. Lesbia and Rupert Blake were very good friends.

Jenny, true to her word, was lying upstairs in her own room in the enjoyment of a forbidden novel. Gilroy had had some business to transact at the village, six miles off, and would not be back in time to preside over the painting. Indeed, he very rarely did so. He occasionally lounged in to make some remark about the portrait, which was sure to arouse Lesbia's smouldering anger, but he generally left the artist and his model pretty much to themselves.

Blake busied himself with his easel, and Lesbia arranged herself in a consciously graceful position in her bamboo chair. The garden made a charming background for her rich dark beauty.

"Has the heat been trying you much?" asked the artist sympathetically, as he set to work. "I thought you looked a little pale when I came first."

"No, I like the heat, thanks; I am a perfect lizard in that way," said Lesbia, smiling; "but it is very kind of you to notice my looks."

Gilroy had seen her at lunch-time and had not only omitted to ask her if the heat tried her, but had never mentioned that she was pale.

"Kind! it is not difficult to be kind to you," murmured Blake in his softest voice.

He really admired Lesbia Dixon immensely. He thought her one of the handsomest women he had ever seen. He wondered if she had money. The Manor House was kept up in good style, and the plate and china were beyond reproach. He decided that the Colonel was well off, and began to speculate vaguely thereon.

"I wonder if the poppies in my hat are faded? I forgot to ask Jenny to gather me some fresh ones," said Lesbia, changing the conversation.

"They are perfect—they are no more faded than you are," said Rupert, surveying her with his mild admiring eyes. "You are almost too handsome for me to paint."

"Why?" asked Lesbia, much flattered. Gilroy never paid her compliments of this kind. She made a mental note of the fact.

"Because when I look at you I forget to paint," he answered boldly.

"How very foolish you are!" Lesbia laughed faintly. "You cannot call me good-looking when I have such a—such a nose!"

She felt so thoroughly in sympathy with the artist that she could afford to mention this injured feature to him without feeling in the least uncomfortable. She was sure that he would treat the subject with tact. She would rather have perished than mentioned it to Frank, who would only have laughed in his brutally matter-of-fact way, and chucked her under the chin, and told her not to bother her head any more about it. He would have told her that if he didn't mind it, why should she? And this was not the way Lesbia wished to be treated at all.

She had not misplaced her confidence in Rupert Blake.

"Your nose is delightful," he murmured—his voice seldom rose above a murmur when he was speaking to a woman—"it always reminds me of Tennyson's 'Maud.' Don't you remember the line, 'The least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose'? Isn't it a beautiful description?"

Lesbia felt it was both beautiful and soothing. She squinted doubtfully down at the feature in question. It was nice to think that it had been aquiline all these years and that she had found it out at last.

"I am afraid it isn't exactly 'delicate,'" she said deprecatingly. "Jenny says it is thick."

"It is no more thick than Cleopatra's was, I'll venture to say. And think what havoc she wrought in the world. Indeed, you are of the Cleopatra type altogether. I have often thought so."

It was very pleasant to be so understood and appreciated. Lesbia resolved to look up all about Cleopatra and her nose at the earliest opportunity. She reflected that Frank would have been incapable of drawing such apt comparisons if he had been engaged to her for a hundred years. But then she always knew that Frank misunderstood her every action as well as her every feature.

Rupert Blake painted on in silence for some time after this. A light breeze sprang up and faintly ruffled the waving meadow grass in the fields beyond. A delicious coolness crept into the hot air.

"Oh, how nice!" said Lesbia, stretching out her arms and forgetting her pose for a moment.

"I wish I had begun to paint you like that instead of this," said the artist admiringly, stopping to look at her.

"Like what?"

"With your arms stretched out, and that eager expression on your face. As if you were waiting for some one whom you loved. I have never seen you look like that before."

Lesbia's arms dropped to her side.

"It would be rather a fatiguing pose," she answered a little coldly, resuming her former position.

Blake took up his brush again and painted away in silence for some time. At last he said:

'You are not angry with me, are you?"

"Why should I be?" said Lesbia.

"For what I said. I suppose I caught the look that is generally reserved for—a happier man; and I ought not to have remarked upon it. But I am glad I have seen it once, even though it is not for me."

Lesbia flushed. There was a secret delicious terror to her in listening to speeches like this. She was drifting—and she was drifting wilfully.

"If you think that I ever look at Frank in a ridiculously sentimental fashion," she said carelessly, "you are quite mistaken. He would not know what to do with such a look if I were to bestow it on him."

"I have sometimes feared he did not understand you," said the artist in his lowest voice.

"He does not understand me in the least," returned Lesbia with unexpected readiness. "I don't think we have a single idea in common. Of course he is very kind," she added, in hasty compunction.

"Oh, yes, they always are when they don't understand you," said Rupert Blake, with unconscious sarcasm. "It is the only way they can make up for the lack in themselves."

Lesbia wondered if this were true. She pulled a long-stemmed lupin towards her, and began to idly strip off its blue flowers.

"I wonder!" she said in a low tone.

"When it comes to wondering, there is generally something wrong," said the artist, putting away his brushes, and not looking at her. "Do you honestly think that you and Mr. Gilroy are suited to one another?"

"N—no," said Lesbia hesitatingly. "I suppose we aren't. But they say extremes meet, don't they?"

"They meet uncomfortably sometimes," said Rupert Blake.

Lesbia was silent. Then she looked towards the house.

"It is tea-time," she said, in a different voice. "I can hear Parker rattling the cups and saucers—welcome sound! And there is Frank coming over the lawn to see how you have been getting on."

As she spoke Gilroy's tall form drew near them. Lesbia contrasted its stalwart proportions and almost aggressive manliness with the graceful, drooping, artistic figure before her. At present Frank was in her bad books, and she preferred grace to strength.

"Hullo," said Gilroy, lounging up to them, "have you two been hard at work ever since lunch?—for I consider you work the hardest of the two, Lesbia. If so you must be pretty well baked."

"There is a delicious breeze just now," said Lesbia rather primly, taking off the poppy-wreathed hat, and beginning to play with the crumpled petals; "we have found it most refreshing."

"Let us see how you are getting on," said Gilroy, going round to the easel without further remark to Lesbia. "Oh, I say, this won't do at all, old man! You are flattering her most egregiously."

Rupert Blake smiled in a resigned way, and Lesbia coloured angrily.

"Lesbia isn't that spiritual type at all—and you have made her lips too Rossettiish for anything. The background's very nice. Those lupins come out well, and make a nice bit of colour."

"It seems to me you think more of the background than you do of me," said Lesbia, betrayed into an exhibition of ill-temper. "Papa thinks it is very like."

"Oh, I dare say. He'd say anything," returned Gilroy carelessly; "but you must see for yourself, Lesbia, that this isn't your nose at all. I can't think what you've done to it, Blake, but never in the world did it grow on Lesbia's face."

"I only portray it as I see it," said the artist with a slight smile; "to me the portrait seems excellent."

"It is idealised in a most ridiculous fashion. You'll excuse me for putting it so bluntly, my dear fellow, won't you?" Lesbia felt that the apology for this brutal rudeness was due to her and not to Blake. "But the fact is, a man wants to have a picture of his wife as she really is."

"I am not your wife yet," said Lesbia in a voice that he alone could hear, rising from her seat, and throwing her Oriental shawl over one arm, "and perhaps I never may be."

The bitterness of the voice was so unmistakeable that Gilroy stared at her in blank amazement. He saw that something had seriously offended her.

"What is the matter?" he asked aloud rather anxiously, going up to her and taking the shawl from her. "What makes you speak like that, Lesbia?"

Exasperated at his want of tact, Lesbia moved away without vouchsafing him either look or answer.

The artist watched them with a slight smile. Surely this was not a very devoted couple!

"What is the matter?" persisted Gilroy, walking on in front with Lesbia, and leaving Blake to follow after with all his paraphernalia. "What have I done?"

"You needn't have insulted me before Mr. Blake," said Lesbia, scarlet with mortification. "If you think me plain I don't see why you should tell him so."

"Really, Lesbia, you are too childish," said Gilroy, his anxiety abating and his annoyance rising. "Do you mean to tell me that I am to stand by and watch Blake painting you as you have never been in your life and not say a word? I love you for what you are, not for what——"

"I don't believe you love me at all. You don't care how I look or what I wear. I have a frightful headache this afternoon and you have never noticed it."

"How could I tell you have a headache?"

"Mr. Blake knew it in a moment," said Lesbia; "but then he has some sympathy, and you haven't a scrap. He saw how pale I was at once."

"You have colour enough now, at any rate," said Gilroy, looking at her in some bewilderment.

"That is because you have made me walk over this blazing lawn without a parasol," cried Lesbia, putting her hand to her flushed cheek.

"I never noticed——"

"Of course you didn't. You never do! I don't suppose you would notice it if I were to have a sunstroke before your very eyes."

"I'll go and fetch you a——"

"Please don't trouble. We are half-way to the house now. I left my sunshade under the tree where I was sitting. Mr. Blake will bring it, no doubt. He never forgets things. He is very thoughtful. This is the first time I have ever walked to the house without a parasol."

"You surely are not angry with me because I forgot a little thing like that? I thought you were above this sort of thing, Lesbia," said Gilroy, looking at her with a slight curl of the lip.

"Oh, I don't mind in the least, and I am not at all angry," said Lesbia with a vicious toss of her head. "You can neglect me as much as you like, and call me as plain as you please. What does it matter to me?"

"I am not going to take notice of such an absurd display of temper," said Gilroy quietly, unfastening the French window for her that she might pass through. "You can't be well, or you wouldn't talk such nonsense."

Lesbia turned on him with a whole world of tragedy in her eyes.

"You may wake some day to find that

it is not nonsense," she cried, "and then perhaps you will be sorry you haven't treated me properly. There is only one person who ever has understood and sympathised with me, and that is——"

"Mr. Blake?" said Gilroy in his most imperturbable tone, standing aside to let her pass. "Yes, I begin to see the situation, Lesbia. What a pity it is I am not more like him!"

CHAPTER III.

It wanted three weeks to Lesbia's wedding day. The portrait was not finished. The sittings under the shady tree were still of daily occurrence. Gilroy never came to them now, he stood aloof with a coldly scornful air. He would give Lesbia her head, as he put it to himself, and see how matters would end. He had no idea of posing as an injured rival if Blake wooed, and wooed successfully. Lesbia should certainly have a free hand.

Jenny, always his loyal friend, had remonstrated with her sister in vain on her persistent flirtation with Rupert Blake. But Lesbia had merely shrugged her shoulders, and told Jenny sharply that she was the best judge of her own affairs.

This particular afternoon Jenny was watching the artist and his model from the open window of her bedroom. She could see that Lesbia wore an unusual expression of interest and animation, and that Mr. Blake was more gracefully sympathetic than ever. She shook her little fist at the pair, and her eyes filled with angry tears. Surely, surely Frank was worthy of a better fate than this. She bit her lip harder than ever presently when she saw Lesbia take a damask rose from her slim belt and give it to Rupert with a blush and a smile. To Jenny this act of coquetry was also an act of disloyalty and wickedness. She turned from the window and threw herself on the sofa, burying her face in the soft old cushion on which she had sobbed out many of her childish griefs. But this grief was not a childish one, and it was beyond finding relief in tears.

Lesbia came in presently to find her lying there, very still indeed.

"Come down to tea, Jenny," she said, walking over to the glass and smiling at her own glowing image; "Mr. Blake has finished for this afternoon and we are going to have it out on the lawn."

"I don't want any tea, thanks," said Jenny shortly.

"Why ever not? What is the matter with you?" said Lesbia, turning round and surveying her sister's pale cheeks with astonishment. "Are you ill?"

"No, I am not ill. Lesbia, do you really mean to marry Frank Gilroy in three weeks' time?"

"I don't know, I am sure," returned Lesbia carelessly; "there is plenty of time to think about it."

"If you are, I think the way you are going on with Mr. Blake is positively disgraceful," said Jenny, her honest indignation bursting forth at last, "and how Frank can stand it I cannot think."

"Dear me, what a fuss you are making," said Lesbia sharply. "If Frank doesn't complain I am sure no one else has a right to. He is too much of a stick to care what I do."

"He is not a stick! He is the best and nicest man I ever knew," said Jenny wrathfully. "He bears with your behaviour because he loves you so, and is so patient. He is a thousand times too good for you."

"Dear me," said Lesbia again, "what makes you take the cudgels up on his behalf so eagerly?"

Jenny turned her face away so that the scarlet flush that crept into her cheeks should be unobserved.

"I can't bear to think you could throw over such a man as Frank for such a flippant, frivolous creature as Mr. Blake," she answered.

"Well, the fact is," said Lesbia, sitting down by the open window, "I am tired of Frank."

A silence fell on the sisters after this. Then Jenny said in a muffled voice:

"Shall you tell him so?"

"I suppose so—some time."

"This is Rupert Blake's work, I suppose," said Jenny scornfully; "he has been making love to you behind Frank's back."

"He has been doing nothing of the kind. But I feel he is the only person who has ever understood me."

"How can you be so wicked as to want to break Frank's heart?" cried Jenny angrily. "All that talk about being 'misunderstood' is such nonsense. You will never get any one else to understand you as well as Frank."

"We shall see," said Lesbia, leaving the room humming a little tune.

She and Rupert Blake had their afternoon tea together that afternoon alone. Jenny was firm in her refusal to appear.

Late in the evening Gilroy rode over

from Harewood Grange to see Lesbia. He found her walking about the garden alone in the dim purple twilight. Colonel Dixon had gone out, she told him, and Jenny was in bed with a bad headache.

"So you are all alone, and I am to have you entirely to myself," said Gilroy with a slightly mocking intonation in his voice; "it is a long time since I have been able to really talk to you, Lesbia."

Lesbia did not reply. She wrapped herself a little more closely in the white shawl she wore.

"But we shall have plenty of time to talk by-and-by, shall we not?" went on Gilroy after a moment's pause; "you will be my wife in three weeks' time."

Lesbia looked at him in the dim light. She suddenly realised that this was not a man to be lightly offended. He was patient and long-suffering, but this patience and long-suffering had its limits. He had loved her dearly—none knew that better than she—but the love had its limits also. His handsome face looked rather grave and stern. His manner was anything but lover-like.

"The fact is, Frank," she said at last, "I begin to think we have made a mistake."

"Is it not rather late in the day to begin to think that sort of thing, Lesbia?"

"I dare say it is. I can't help it, I am sure. But we should never get on, Frank, and it's much better to find it out now than when we are married."

"I have tried to be patient with you, Lesbia, and to take no notice of your continual outbursts of temper and petulance," said Gilroy firmly, "but the time for an explanation has arrived at last, and I mean to have it."

"It's entirely your own fault," said Lesbia irrelevantly; "you never were in the least nice to me, or seemed to care."

"You knew I cared. I have not petted and pampered you as one might pet and pamper a favourite lap-dog, I confess. But as long as I thought you loved me, I would have laid down my life for you any day. If you had loved me, Lesbia, you would have understood me."

"Well, I understand you now, at any rate," said Lesbia tartly, "and I don't want this farce to go on any longer."

"Do you mean that you wish our engagement to be at an end?"

"Yes. I am tired of it. We should never get on."

She took off her engagement ring and looked at it. With a sudden burst of anger Gilroy snatched it from her and flung it far from him into the shrubbery.

"There, that is the end of it all," he said harshly; "and I know well enough whom I have to thank for this piece of work. It is that wretched apology for a man who flatters you till your head is turned. I wish you joy of him."

"You are very rude!" said Lesbia rather frightened at his tone.

"Of course I have seen it coming on for some time," went on Gilroy, taking no notice of her. "These sentimental, poetical speeches that you enjoy so! I never made love to you like that, thank Heaven! but I'll wager my love for you was as much stronger than his as sunlight is stronger than moonlight. But it is dead now, and you have no more power to hurt me. I'm not even going to say that you have destroyed my faith in women, which is what most men would say under the circumstances, because you have not. You've not even ruined my life, Lesbia."

"You are talking very unkindly," said Lesbia, distinctly annoyed that he did not show more regret at the cancelling of the engagement. "I am sure I don't want to ruin anybody's life. I am very sorry about it."

"Are you?" He laughed a little. "I believe you care so little about my feelings, Lesbia, that you would ask me to be best man at your wedding. You haven't an atom of heart."

"Yes, I have—for the right person."

"And the right person is Blake, I suppose," said Gilroy, biting his lip. "Well as I said before, I wish you joy."

"You talk as if Mr. Blake and I were engaged."

"What? Have you really waited to be off with the old love before you are on with the new? From what I have seen I should not have imagined that to be the case."

"If you are going to talk like this," said Lesbia, "I think I had better go in. Good night."

She held out her hand as she spoke. Gilroy looked at it scornfully, and then burst into a harsh laugh.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "you can bid me good night and good-bye as calmly as though we were mere acquaintances of a week! We who have pledged ourselves to pass all our lives together, and who, in three weeks' time, were to have been man

and wife! They say some women have no feelings, and I suppose you are one of them. I could find it in my heart to hope that you will be punished for this, Lesbia."

"I have told you I am sorry," said Lesbia with stiff impatience.

"Yes—but in such a tone! Almost as if you hated me! And this is to be farewell for ever, Lesbia?"

"I suppose so."

"Then it shall be for ever! With me there is never any going back on my word. Once broken our troth shall be always broken. If you were to find that you had made a mistake and were to come and tell me that you loved me best after all, I warn you that it would be useless."

"I am not likely to tell you such a thing."

"Good-bye, then," said Gilroy, just touching her hand with his outstretched fingers. "Good-bye, Lesbia. I believe I know you better than you know yourself, and that you will find out your mistake—when it is too late."

He turned and left her.

With a certain sense of triumphant uneasiness Lesbia prepared for her last sitting to Rupert Blake. She had not told her father of her broken engagement; she dreaded his anger too much. But she had defiantly flung the gauntlet down before Jenny, who, pale and angry, had spoken to her as she had never been spoken to in her life before.

"You have flung away a flower for a weed," she had said, "the substance for the shadow. You deserve to be unhappy, Lesbia."

But Lesbia did not look at all unhappy this afternoon as she sat in her poppy-wreathed hat smiling into Rupert Blake's large brown eyes. She felt there was a romantic flavour about this new love which the old had never possessed.

"And so this is our last sitting!" she said, as the artist took up his brushes. "I shall feel quite dull without my pleasant afternoons."

"How sweet of you to say so," replied the artist. "I wish I could believe it is true As for me, I dare not tell you how I shall feel. My lips are sealed, and I cannot tell you all that is in my heart."

Lesbia blushed and looked down. Evidently Frank had not confided to his friend the dismal fact that he had been jilted.

"Have you seen Mr. Gilroy this morning?" she asked rather nervously.

"Yes," answered the artist in a sighing tone. "I have."

"And what did he—how did he seem?" demanded Lesbia, unable to refrain from asking now Frank bore himself under the blow.

"He seemed the same as usual—in rude, almost vulgar health. Some people are so aggressively strong," said Rupert, his slight figure bending more than ever.

"And he didn't say anything about—me?" asked Lesbia, who was not pleased at the idea that Gilroy should be going about as usual.

"No. But why should we speak of him? Let us talk about ourselves."

"But I must speak of him. I want to tell you something. You remember I said that Mr. Gilroy never understood me?"

"I remember—yes. It was very sad. You deserved to be understood," said Rupert, mildly sympathetic.

He had discovered that Colonel Dixon was not the rich man he had supposed him to be, and the quality of his sympathy and admiration was now neither so pronounced nor so warm as formerly.

But Lesbia rushed upon her fate.

"Well, after you talked to me, I seemed to see things more clearly. I realised that it would never do for me to marry Frank. It would be frightful to pass one's life in the society of a person who constantly misunderstood one—and so I have broken our engagement off."

There was dead silence. A light wind ruffled the scarlet petals of Lesbia's poppies, and shook a few of the blue lupin flowers to the ground.

"Isn't it a pity to cancel an engagement so hastily?" said Mr. Blake, in a business-like tone. "Have you thought it over thoroughly?"

"Quite thoroughly. I have considered the question most carefully. I wonder Frank has not told you."

"Well, I suppose a woman knows her own heart best, but I confess it seems to me that you are making a mistake," said Rupert, busily painting at Lesbia's eyebrows and looking at his model quite unmoved. "Gilroy's a good fellow."

"I thought you would have sympathised with me at once. You have always insinuated that we were not suited to each other."

"Oh, there you are quite mistaken, my dear Miss Dixon. I merely asked you if you were quite sure that you had chosen

the right man, because there seemed to be so much, er—friction between you occasionally. But of course you are quite right to break off the match if you feel that you are not going to be happy. Only please don't speak as if I had anything to do with it. Indeed my serious advice to you is to reconsider the matter."

Lesbia turned sick and faint. So this was the man for whom she had given up her lover! This man who had made disguised love to her for weeks, had caused her to break her troth, and who now told her in the coldest of voices that she had better "reconsider the matter."

After a pause the artist spoke again:

"I take so deep an interest in you, Miss Dixon, that I shall hope to hear that you will soon have made up your little tiff with Gilroy I am going abroad next week, and I shall expect to hear of you soon as Mrs. Gilroy"

"You are going abroad?"

Lesbia fixed her eyes upon him. She wondered if she had ever made Gilroy suffer as she was suffering now. The pain, the shame, the humiliation, of having given this man her love unasked seemed to stifle her.

"Yes—abroad," said Rupert airily, surveying the portrait with his head on one side. "I have had enough of England for the next couple of years at any rate. One rusts here. I want to make some studies of Egyptian scenery. You should persuade Gilroy to come abroad too after you are married. We might make up a party."

Lesbia smiled bitterly.

"I shall never marry Frank," she said in a low voice. She was thinking of his last words to her. She knew now that he held her in light esteem, and that she had fallen from her high estate.

"Well, don't worry about it," said Rupert cheerfully. "Come and look at the portrait, and tell me what you think of it."

Lesbia rose and went over to the picture of herself. She stood musingly gazing at it for a few moments. Then she turned to the artist.

"Frank was right," she said, with a hard little laugh. "You have flattered me, and it does not suit me to be flattered!

A year later Gilroy, who had been absent from home on a prolonged holiday, found himself once more riding down the country lanes where he and Lesbia had once walked together as betrothed lovers. He was so heart-whole that he smiled as he thou of that far-off time, and he switched the sweet-scented hedges with his ridi whip as he passed, out of pure gaiety heart.

As he turned a corner, he came f to face with Jenny, who was on foot. dismounted and walked beside her. Th had not met since the day when he h gone away from the Manor in the charac of a rejected lover. That time was upp most in both their minds.

"Lesbia is wretched," said Jenny, afte little desultory conversation, in her br quest manner. "When are you coming see her?"

"Never!" said Gilroy uncompromising

"You know that animal painter we away without proposing?"

"I imagined so when I heard he was Egypt. But I wasn't aware that he was animal-painter."

"You know what I mean. And Lesb is sorry now."

Gilroy stopped and took one of her han in his.

"Believe me, my dear loyal little Jenn when I tell you that were Lesbia the la woman in the world, I would never, nev marry her. She has shown herself t heartless. I did not go abroad to get cure of my very foolish infatuation for he because I was cured before I went."

Jenny sighed, and turned away her hea She had done her best, and how hopele that best was the expression of his fa told her.

"But I have come home with ever intention of marrying a wife," went o Gilroy, trying to look into her beautif dark-fringed grey eyes, "and I think shall be very thankful to Lesbia for havin treated me so abominably."

"Why?" The grey eyes turned an met his now, full of honest surprise.

"She has shown me the differenc between false and true," said Gilroy, smilin at her. "Jenny, don't you understan me?"

And stooping, he kissed her hand.

LOVE.

By SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

"Love the gift is love the debt,"
Take the lesson, sweetly set.
O cold youth! to whom love's boon
Comes as roses do in June,
Fresh and fragrant, lightly won
By the misses of the sun;
Blooming equally for all,
In wild or parterre, cot or hall.

Take the gift so freely given
As the richest under Heaven;
It will light the darkest day,
It will smooth the roughest way;
Hush the sigh, recall the smile,
Full and patient all the while,
Only never quite forget,
"Love the gift is love the debt."

For a dreadful day will come,
When eyes are dim, and lips are dumb;
Or love reluctantly may turn
From the hearts that proudly spurn;
Wearied of the chill reply,
Of the happy hours let by
Of baffled yearning, vain regret;
"Love the gift is love the debt."

Then in full the tribute pay,
Give the pittance while you may;
Blossoms droop and sunbeams fade,
Of the dark hours be afraid;
Lest some day you vainly plead
For help and strength in bitter need;
Think, when hope and faith are met,
"Love the gift is love the debt."

SCUTTLED.

By T. E. SOUTHEE.

Author of "Weatherbound," "Waterlogged," "The Sole Survivor," "A Haunted Memory," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I. "ALL IN THE DOWNS."

It was a dull, dreary morning in November when a stage-coach, drawn by four handsome greys, stopped at the door of a large red-bricked house, situated at the extremity of High Street, in the ancient and loyal city of Canterbury. The door was immediately opened, and an old grey-headed footman brought out a quantity of luggage, which was duly hoisted up and deposited on the roof. This done, the guard took his seat, vociferated "Now, sir!" and then blew a short, sharp blast on his horn.

While all this was going on outside, in the hall, a young man of two-and-twenty was folded in his mother's arms in a long, mutual, and loving embrace.

To tear himself away, to kiss and bid adieu to his sisters, and to wring the hand of faithful old Robert, was the work of a moment, and the next he was on the box by the coachman's side.

The guard blew a long flourish on his horn, the horses pranced, the driver cracked his whip, and away they went, the "Phœnix" bowling along towards the great metropolis.

The lady whose only son had just departed was the widow of Dr. Gilmore, a physician of good repute, who had died lately rather suddenly, and at his death his widow found herself in that very disagreeable and anomalous position, designated by the world "in reduced circumstances." This same world said a good many rather cruel things about the doctor and his wife, about their extravagance and improvidence, and pretended to have a large amount of sympathy and pity for the widow and her family; but it did nothing to help her, and when it was reported that her son Charley was going out to the West Indies to look after a sugar plantation, which had been left to Mrs. Gilmore by an uncle, who died in Trinidad—which said plantation had not of late years brought any adequate return to its owner—it only laughed and said he was going on a wild goose chase.

Charles Gilmore's destination in London was the Commercial Road, where resided his uncle, his father's brother, a merchant and shipowner, to whom he was to pay a short visit previous to his departure. But of his journey to London and this visit I have nothing to say. His passage had been arranged for by Mr. Gilmore in a West Indian trader, the "Euphemia," of Aberdeen, classed A 1 at Lloyd's, Martin Farley captain and part owner.

As is often the case, the vessel was not ready for sea on the day appointed for sailing; but as it was said she was under engagement to break ground on a certain date, she hauled out of the dock and dropped down to Gravesend. Mr. Gilmore was informed of this, but it was stated that the passengers were not to join the ship until she was ready to sail. Accordingly on the third morning Charles and his uncle started for Gravesend.

On arriving there they engaged a boat.

"What ship, sir?" asked the boatman.

"The 'Euphemia,' a black barque, with a yellow streak."

"She's gone, sir, sailed last tide."

At first Mr. Gilmore seemed inclined to doubt the man, but on pulling about and not finding her among the vessels at anchor, he became convinced that he was right.

"What the deuce does Farley mean by this?" he exclaimed. "I don't understand it!"

"What's to be done?" asked Charles.

"Take the coach and go on to Deal; she'll be sure to anchor in the Downs," replied the waterman.

This was accordingly done, and they arrived at Deal late in the evening. It had been a cold rainy day, the wind blowing freshly from the south-west; but towards sunset it had increased to a gale, with an unpromising blackness in that quarter, and the sun went down lurid and red.

To Mr. Gilmore's enquiry if the "Euphemia" had arrived, the answer was that she had "just put back."

"Put back!" he exclaimed. "Well, I don't understand that fellow Farley. It almost seems as if he wanted to shirk taking you, Charley. If he wasn't an old fellow, with a wife and family, I should think he fancied you would prove too attractive to his lady passengers!"

"Lady passengers!" echoed Charles. "I say, uncle, you are sly; you didn't say anything about ladies. Who are they, and what are they like?"

"Not so fast, my boy. Their name is Harding, and they are mother and daughter. I have never seen them. All I know about them is that they are Creoles."

"Creoles! Good heavens!"

"What's the matter now?" asked the uncle.

"Why, they are darkies, are they not?"

"No, they are pure white. If they had a particle of black blood in them, they would not be Creoles."

"Why, then, are they called Creoles?" asked Charles.

"Because they are born in the West Indies."

"Thank you, sir. I shall remember."

"Yes, you had better, for these Creoles are very touchy on the point of colour."

"What would you gentlemen like to take?" asked the landlord of the "Cinque Ports Arms," as he ushered them into a large and comfortable room, with a blazing fire in the grate.

"I'll have a glass of brandy-and-water, strong and hot," replied Mr. Gilmore; "and then we'll talk about something to eat."

"I'm not much used to hot grog," replied Charles, as the landlord looked towards him; "but under the circumstances I think I will follow suit."

"And now, my friend," said Mr. Gilmore, when the landlord returned with the grog, "this gentleman is a passenger going out to the West Indies. He missed the ship at Gravesend, and the men outside tell us she is now in the Downs. Is there any chance of his getting on board to-night?"

"No, sir; no, it's not to be thought of. I should not care to trust myself, or see any one else trust themselves, in an open boat on such a night as this. Besides, there's no occasion; the ship can't sail in the teeth of such a gale."

The supper was ended and the two sat by the fire smoking, and, if the truth mus be told, indulging in another glass of ho grog, when a dull, distant report, loud an heavy, came from the sea.

"What is that?" asked Charles.

"A ship in distress," replied Mr. Gilmore and he took out his watch and listened and ere the minute had quite elapsed ther came the roar of another gun, and agai another.

"There's a ship ashore, and the life-boa has gone out to her," said the landlord who at this moment entered the room.

"I thought so," replied Mr. Gilmore "I hope it is not the 'Euphemia.'"

"Can't tell, sir. It's the 'Gull' as fired.

"Well, I hope not; but at any rate it' an awful night."

They sat on smoking for more than a hour. The storm raged, and the heavy waves thundered on the shore. Stoicism may do its utmost, but it would be a poo heart which could not sympathise with those who were exposed to the fury of such a storm as was now raging, thought Mr Gilmore.

"I can't help thinking of those poo ladies," said Charles, breaking the long silence.

"Yes, rather an unpropitious beginning to the voyage. You may thank your stars that you are not exposed to this gale."

"I do, sir, I do; but I hope it's not the 'Euphemia' that's come to grief."

"We are all in Heaven's hands, my boy, and I hope so also; but it's late, let us retire."

The following morning the landlord, having noticed the anxiety of the two gentlemen as to the wreck, and wishing to set their minds at ease, tapped at Mr. Gilmore's door and said:

"The ship has gone to pieces, sir; but the crew and passengers are saved."

"Thank Heaven!" was the response. "Do you know the ship's name?"

"Yes, sir, it's the 'Able Gower,' of London, a large ship bound to the Isle of France with a valuable cargo."

"How is the weather?"

"The gale is moderating."

CHAPTER II.

"A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA."

CAPTAIN FARLEY was walking the poop-deck with a lowering brow, and was evidently in no very amiable humour. He was a man of about fifty years of age, and report said that in his youth he had been

wild, and some of his acquaintances were wont to plague him by recalling the not very creditable escapades of former days, the remembrance of which did not seem of a pleasant character. It may be that the captain was recalling some of his youthful freaks, for his aspect was decidedly cross and ill-humoured. He was holding on to the mizen backstay watching a shore boat, which was pulling out and evidently making for the "Euphemia," and contained Charles Gilmore and his uncle, and he was muttering curses on the wind and weather, which had upset his little plan of sailing without the former.

"You would not listen to me, sir," said the mate, a short, thick-set man, with a broad, red face deeply pitted with the small-pox. "I told you we'd be best without him."

"Hold your tongue, Hicks," said the captain savagely; "it would have been all right if it had not been for this cursed gale. You know I could not have refused to take him."

"I suppose not; but it's deuced unfortunate."

"Yes, for him, at any rate. But here they are."

In another minute Charles and his uncle stood on the quarter-deck. Captain Farley got, as he expected, a good wigging, and then, with a "Heaven speed you," and a cordial shake of the hand, Mr Gilmore went over the side, and Charles was fairly launched on his voyage.

The gale had to a great extent subsided, but it still blew strongly, and the sea was rough, and as this was Charles's first experience of stormy weather at sea, he very soon retired to his berth, and was prostrated by sea-sickness. How he passed the night he did not know; but after daylight the wind subsided, and he grew better and made his appearance in the cuddy, and was introduced to Mrs. Harding and her daughter Edith.

These ladies were old sailors, and had not suffered the miseries of sea-sickness, but they could still sympathise with those who did.

Independent of his recent sufferings Charles Gilmore was not in his usual spirits; he had left behind him all that he loved best in the world, and he was depressed and sad. Besides this there was something in the looks and manner of the captain and mate that repelled him; and this, and the fact that he had not slept on the previous night, induced him to retire early to his berth to pass a second night at anchor in the Downs. When he awoke in the morning he found the wind had changed, and the ship was under weigh, bowling along down Channel with "a wet sheet and a flowing sea, and a wind that follows fast," much to the satisfaction of all on board.

The morning was fine and bright, and for the time of year warm, and when Charles came on deck he found the two lady passengers there before him. They greeted him kindly, and hoped he had passed a better night. Mrs. Harding, though past forty, was still a very beautiful woman, with all the grace of carriage and amiability and warmth of manner which are the characteristics of the Creole race; but it was in Edith Harding that these were most prominent. In addition to the delicate beauty of her form and features, her eyes, large and languishing, were horribly inclined to sparkle, and her mouth more often than not was garnished with the most roguish of smiles, luxuriant hair, small and beautifully shaped feet and hands, and a voice which was melody itself completed the charm which the grace of her carriage and the cordiality of her manner had commenced.

There is no place like shipboard to discover a man or a woman's character, and to make people you have never seen before either intimate friends or avowed enemies.

In the present instance, though Charles Gilmore forbore from all contentions with the captain and mate and warred not with their opinions, he was not long in discovering that if he valued his peace of mind he must not oppose or contradict his rather irascible skipper or his mate. Indeed these two made themselves so disagreeable that it seemed, not only to Gilmore himself, but also to his two fellow passengers, that they were seeking to find some means of quarrelling with him.

On the other hand, Captain Farley seemed especially anxious to make himself agreeable to the Hardings, and to them he never was more unpleasant than when he strove to be agreeable.

CHAPTER III. OUT ON THE GRAND OLD OCEAN.

We left the "Euphemia" bearing down Channel with a strong south-east breeze. The English Channel in the month of December, at least as far as temperature is concerned, is not the most agreeable locality in the world; then came the Bay of Biscay with its tumultuous seas and adverse gales,

which did not contribute to the comfort and satisfaction of the passengers on board the good barque "Euphemia." But these annoyances and discomforts were now all past, and they were hoping that there would be no more of these sea horrors during the remainder of the voyage.

To Charles Gilmore and the Hardings it was a time of daily increasing happiness. The wind was fair, the sea was smooth, ahead was the vast Atlantic, above the glorious blue heavens. Day by day Charley had been growing in favour with these two amiable ladies. He was one of those who, if he applied for admittance to the inmost sympathies of the human heart, never failed to obtain an entrance. His grief for the loss of his father, his sorrow at his separation from his mother and sister, and his lonely position, together with the reciprocation of feeling and ideas, had made them far more intimate with him than many persons they had known for years. There were few subjects on which he could not converse; and on whatever subject he spoke, there was something more displayed than ordinary judgement.

Another bond of union was their mutual dislike and distrust of Captain Farley and his crew. Things were not going very smoothly on board the "Euphemia." The skipper was captious and ill-tempered, and the crew sullen and, at times, half inclined to be mutinous. Indeed, had it not been that they were afraid of Farley's violence, they would have secured him as a prisoner and offered the command to the mate. Had they done so they might have found that they had sprung out of the frying-pan into the fire.

It was at this time that an incident occurred which somewhat opened Gilmore's eyes as to the character of the skipper and his mate. One night as he lay in his berth, between sleeping and waking, he heard voices in the cabin, apparently in earnest conversation, and on listening found that the voices were those of the captain and the mate. Presently the former exclaimed in louder tones than usual:

"No, no, man! Who ever heard of a West Indiaman catching fire? At any rate I'm not going to try it. No, scuttling I started with, and scuttling I shall stick to."

"What about Mr. Gilmore?"

"That's the knotty point," replied the captain; "I must think about that. I shall have another tot and then turn in."

There was a pause, and then the mate asked:

"What about Ross, is he all right?"

"Yes, he's safe enough."

Again there was a pause, followed by th stumbling of feet up the companion ladde Then while Gilmore lay cogitating on th conversation, there came several violer snorts as of a drunken man in his slee and eventually the sound of a heavy bod falling on the deck. He rose and opene the door of his berth, and there in a cor fused heap lay the skipper, breathin heavily, and muttering:

"Empty casks, indeed! Hodgson's Pa Ale! I should say so, rather!"

Charles Gilmore returned to his bertl but sleep never again visited his eyes tha night. He could not make out very clearl the nature of the danger which threatene him, but there was danger of some sort, h was perfectly convinced. At the sam time he was also firmly persuaded tha whatever the peril was, he, individually was powerless to avert it.

The question he was debating with him self now was, should he tell his fellow passengers what he had overheard? If h did, what good purpose could be served? A last he decided not to alarm the Hardings but to keep his secret to himself.

CHAPTER IV. A PHANTOM ISLAND.

More than three weeks had passed the trades had long since been reached and the ship had been bowling away under a press of canvas at a good rate. But now, though the day was remarkably fine, the breeze was variable, at one time quite light, at another so strong that the studding-sails had to be taken in, and the royal and sky-sails had to be furled. Meantime the sky was serene and bright, but towards evening it became sultry and oppressive. The sea was as smooth as glass, not a breath of wind dimpled its surface.

Mrs. and Miss Harding were seated on the poop taking their tea. It was the second dog watch, and all hands were on deck when they were startled by a cry of "Land ho!"

"Land!" exclaimed the captain. "Nonsense! There's no land within a thousand miles of us; it's absurd!"

"Well," said Mr. Hicks, rubbing his eyes, "this beats me. I've heard of the 'Flying Dutchman' and the 'Phantom Ship,' but what's this?"

"That's more than I can tell," replied Captain Farley. "All I know is that I sailed these seas for thirty years, man and

boy, and have never heard or seen anything of land in these latitudes!"

"But, Captain Farley!" exclaimed Edith, "it's so plain, it must be land!"

"Perhaps we have fallen on a discovery!" suggested Gilmore. "Look at that headland, surely that cannot be an optical illusion?"

The captain made no answer, and he and the mate continued to walk the deck in silence. The breeze freshened, and at last scepticism gave place to conviction, and desirous of not running into danger, Captain Farley ordered the barque's course to be altered, and she bore away to the southward. She had scarcely come to the wind, and the yards had been trimmed, when the whole vanished, as it were, into the sea. Exclamations of astonishment burst from all hands while the captain said:

"I knew it could not be real, and yet I must confess I was so far deceived that I thought it best to give it a wide berth. Square away, Mr. Hicks, and get the stunsail on her again."

The barque had hardly resumed her course when a sudden calm fell upon them; and as in tropical latitudes there is scarcely any twilight, almost simultaneously with the setting of the sun darkness fell upon the sea.

The moon had not yet risen, and the sky was ablaze with millions of stars, shining out in all their glittering effulgence. We have no desire to depreciate the beauties of an English summer night; but the clearness and soft transparency of a tropical sky is something quite different. The English sky appears to be a solid plain, brilliantly studded with stars. In the tropics the great planets hang pendulous, like globes of liquid fire; you could, as it were, see above and beyond them. In short, they seemed swimming in the blue ether.

Then came the full-orbed moon, shedding her silvery light on the calm, glass-like sea.

"How strangely beautiful!" exclaimed Charles Gilmore. "What an expanse of glittering waters! What a stream of glorious light, forming, as it were, a path leading right up to the gates of heaven!"

"Yes," sighed Edith, "a night such as this seems like a foretaste of heaven!"

Captain Farley laughed, saying:

"I am afraid it is more likely to be a portent of a storm."

"I hope not, Captain Farley," said Mrs. Harding, "I think we had enough storms in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay to last for the whole of the voyage."

"Sufficient for the day, or rather of the night, is the beauty thereof," put in Gilmore; "let us not anticipate evil!"

"Philosophers may talk," sneered the captain, "but storms and gales pay no attention," and he turned on his heels and walked away.

"What a cross old thing!" whispered Edith; "I'm sure you said nothing offensive."

"And he said nothing but what is true," laughed Gilmore.

"Perhaps not; but it was the way in which it was said," replied Edith. "Why is he always trying to snub you?"

As she said this she raised her large, soft blue eyes to his, almost coquettishly, and he thought what beautiful eyes they were. She smiled and slightly coloured as he gazed down at her, and she gave him a glance which would have touched the heart of a less susceptible fellow than he was. How exquisitely lovely she looked as she sat there in the moonlight! There was something in the calm serenity of the scene, something in the hush and tranquillity of the night, which touched a tender chord in his heart. There was, too, something in her voice, so clear and soft, which caused him a curious throb of delight, and produced a sensation quite new to him.

"What are you thinking of?" she whispered.

"Thinking of, Miss Harding," he replied. "I am afraid you would be offended if I were to tell you."

"How tiresome you are; how can I tell unless I know what it was?"

"Then I was thinking how very beautiful you were!"

"It's the first time Mr. Gilmore has appeared in the character of a flatterer, and I don't think it becomes him."

"Truth is not flattery," he said sententiously.

Edith rose gracefully and made him a profound curtsy, and then, turning to her mother, said:

"Now, mamma, I think it is time for us to retire," and with a pleasant "good night," they both disappeared down the companion.

CHAPTER V. A BRIGHT VISION CLOUDED.

At this point a new vista opened in Charley Gilmore's life. He was a novice in love, and though the growth of his passion had been rapid, he had not realised its meaning. When his eyes first rested on

Edith Harding he was attracted by her beauty only; but as time went on, and he found that virtue and excellence were joined to beauty, talent, and sweetness of temper, he experienced a sort of pleasure he had never known before, a thrill of satisfaction when he noticed the evident pleasure she took in his society and conversation.

It has been said that in love we idolise the object, and place it apart, looking upon it as superior to all others. In a certain sense this is true; at any rate it was true as far as Charley Gilmore was concerned. But then Edith Harding was not only capable of feeling, but also of exciting deep and intense emotion, and although he had hitherto been considered rather a stolid and unemotional man, he, too, was capable of deep and ardent feeling, and in the depths of his heart there were the germs of strong passions. But like many other men of ardent and impassive nature, he was not easily excited; but like the sea, when its waves are once aroused, they are not to be easily repressed. His acquaintance with Edith Harding, short as it was, had opened up new feelings and new emotions.

There was one great obstacle in the way. Were his pecuniary circumstances at the present time such as would warrant him in trying to win this girl's love? His answer was No, and yet such was the fascination of her presence, and such was daily becoming the over-mastering nature of his passion, that he felt sure that if she gave him the least encouragement he should succumb to it and declare his love. But then if giving his heart and gaining hers were to produce misery to both, ought he not to restrain his voice, if he could not restrain his eyes?

His position was a peculiar one. He could not fly from her, he could not escape the daily temptation of her presence. Again, Mrs Harding was kind-hearted and liberal-minded, and he felt that she would think more about her daughter's happiness than of his somewhat anomalous position; but what chance was there of his gaining her father's consent? But then came the voice of hope, suggesting that the estate might not be in so bad a state as the attorney had represented. Indeed, Mrs. Harding had thrown out some broad hints as to his honesty. But could he stake the tranquillity of his whole life, and the happiness of this sweet girl on so frail a structure? The answer he gave to this question was again an emphatic No! Such were the thoughts that agitated him as he paced the poop deck the morning following incidents related in the last chapter.

As far as the present aspect of heavens was concerned, there was prospect of the storm which Captain Fa had predicted.

That gentleman and Oliver Hicks, mate, were pacing the deck, and at same time carrying on an animated c versation. The mate seemed greatly cited, and the rubicundity of his face nose was more observable than ever.

"I should very much like to know w those men are talking about," said Edith her mother as she sat on a hen-coop reclined against the mizzen rigging. don't know why it is, mamma," she c tinued, after a pause, "but they seem to plotting."

"Nonsense, dear," replied Mrs. Hardi "it's something about the latitude longitude, or the dead-reckoning. Capta and mates are always disputing about s sort of things."

"I don't think so, because Mr. Hi looks first at Mr. Gilmore and then at and then Captain Farley looks at Gilmore and seems to scowl."

"That's quite true; but then he alw seems to scowl at him. I never saw a m so altered."

"Altered! I should think so; why believe he's half-drunk now; and as to cruelty to that poor cabin boy, it shocking."

"True, dear, and I shall be very gl when the voyage is over," replied M Harding.

"So shall I," responded Edith, "f lately I have had a strange presentime that it will not end without hurt a danger."

"Nonsense! Presentiments! I do believe in them. Do you, Mr. Gilmore said she, turning round to him.

"I'm not sure," he replied; "there a so many strange things said on what seer to be unquestionable authority, with rega to omens and prognostications, that I a rather inclined to believe in them as a rule

"Thank you," replied Edith, with pretty smile and a sly upward glance; " thought you would agree with me."

"I should not care to disagree with yo Miss Harding, if I could help it; but wh is the nature of your presentiment?" h asked.

"That this voyage will not end witho some misfortune, or hurt, or danger t either the ship or passengers."

"I quite agree with you," he replied, "but my opinion is not derived from prescience, but from knowledge," and he related the conversation which he had overheard between the captain and the mate.

"Scuttled! what does that mean?" asked Mrs. Harding in a whisper.

"To cut a hole or holes in a vessel to make her sink."

"Good heavens!" cried Edith; "how dreadful! Can nothing be done?"

"Nothing!" he replied, "except to be careful not to let them know that we have any knowledge of their design."

"But they will want to save themselves; they surely would not leave us to perish?" said Mrs. Harding.

"That is a question I cannot answer, especially as regards yourselves," he answered quietly; "but I am afraid, unless Providence intervenes in some strange manner, my fate is sealed."

"But Mr. Gilmore," broke in Mrs. Harding, "is there no way of escape?"

"None that I can see, my dear lady," he replied "We are in their toils, and I fancy we shall not receive much mercy at the hands of these cruel scoundrels."

"Why did you not tell us of this before?" asked Edith

"Because I did not want to excite you. Indeed, I should not have told you now but for your presentiment."

"I am very glad that you have opened our eyes to the danger by which we seem to be encompassed," said Mrs. Harding. "To have been sent into eternity without a word of warning would have been sad indeed."

"Suppose this dastardly deed is to be done, when do you think it will be perpetrated?" asked Edith.

"Not till we are nearer the land than we are now," replied Gilmore.

"Thank Heaven for that!" responded Mrs. Harding. "The time is short. Remember what the psalmist saith, 'They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivereth them out of their distress.' If we do this He may deliver us."

"I'm sure He will," replied Edith. "He'll never let such villains escape, and leave us to perish! But," she continued, laying her hand softly on his shoulder, "why do you think your life is in more danger than ours?"

"Because they said nothing about you and your mother, they only discussed what was to be done with me."

CHAPTER VI. THE CLOUD GATHERS.

THREE days more passed, days of fair winds and tranquil seas. Since the conversation related in the last chapter, the mind of Edith had undergone some change. She was becoming fonder of grave thoughts; she was more pensive, and there was a softness and gentleness in her manner which was very winning, more so than it had been before. Gilmore's thoughts, too, had taken a higher turn; there was also in his manner towards her a gentleness and tenderness which told her that if she thought of him he also thought as constantly of her.

It was one of those beautiful nights which are only to be seen in tropical climes, and these two sat in the moonlight and conversed. They were quite alone, the man at the wheel was dozing, and the watch forward were doing a bit of caulking.

Charles Gilmore, as he cast furtive glances at the sweet face, at the graceful pose of the perfect figure, was seized with an insane longing to make her there and then his own; to pass his arm round her supple waist, to kiss those ruby lips, and pour into her ears the story of his love.

It was the sound of Edith's voice which aroused him from a reverie which was every moment becoming more dangerous to himself and the unconscious object of his passionate longing.

"Have you any idea," she asked, "how far we are from the land?"

"Captain Farley says we shall make it in three or four days, or a week," he replied.

"So soon," she murmured. "I should like this to last for ever!"

"So should I!"

Then there was a pause.

"Edith!" he said softly, "I may call you Edith, may I not, darling?"

She looked down and blushed, and answered "Yes."

The instant afterwards she was pressed to his bosom, and then

If Heaven a draught of pleasure sweet;
One touch of joy to fill our hearts,
'Tis when the lips of lovers meet,
And in each other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the silvery moon and the soft evening gale.

"Weren't you surprised to find I loved you?" he asked, when he had released her from his embrace.

"No," she replied, "I knew it from the first, that is I thought so, but I could not be sure."

"And did you love me from the first, dearest?"

"Yes," she murmured, and a bright blush iffused her cheeks and brow.

Gilmore smiled, and taking her hand ssed it fondly, saying:

"My darling, I thank Heaven for this ippiness!"

At this moment there came a broad, ight, sudden flash of lightning, followed y a peal of distant thunder which died way with a mutter into the distance, and ien all was silent.

"How grand!" exclaimed Edith.

"I think you had better go below, Miss arding," said Captain Farley, who had ist come on deck, approaching her side; we are going to have some serious eather."

"Oh, Captain Farley, don't send me elow, please; I never saw a storm at sea," nswered Edith.

"As you please," he replied, "only you ad better get your cloak. It looks queer leeward!"

At this instant the silence was again nterrupted; another flash of lightning, ollowed by quick, sharp crashes of thunder. fter this there was a long dead pause, nly broken by the voice of the captain rdering the watch to be called to shorten ail.

This was followed by a sleepy "Ay, y, sir," but the mate's voice rang out harp and clear: "Call the watch, and look live and get the stunsails into the top."

Meantime the watch below came on deck, nd the barque was divested of all but her wo square topsails and forecourse.

The aspect of the heavens grew blacker nd blacker to leeward, while the sky in the rest was clear and bright, and the moon till shone with a silvery splendour ren- ered more brilliant by the dark clouds hich came hurrying up from the east.

Suddenly, as if by the wave of a nagician's wand, the sky and the whole urface of the ocean were enveloped in npenetrable darkness; then a vivid flash f lightning lit with a lurid glare the black xpanse, and was followed by a deafening eal of thunder which seemed to burst open he floodgates of heaven, and the rain escended in torrents.

Flash after flash of lightning, and peal fter peal of thunder, followed in rapid uccession; but not a breath of wind stirred n the heavens, while in the intervals etween the thunder a low, hoarse, rum- ling sound came from the eastward.

The crew had just sent down the royal nd top-gallant yards and housed the masts, and had commenced to haul out the reef tackles preparatory to reefing the topsails, when the gale suddenly swooped down upon them like a thunderbolt, and the "Euphemia" like a stricken deer flew before the wild and impetuous gale.

All around was as dark as pitch, except when the lightning lit up the scene and made it the more appalling. There were no mountainous billows, for a sea no sooner raised its head than it was cut off and blown onward in a sheet of spray. The ocean seemed cowed and beaten down, and when the lightning illuminated the sea the vessel seemed floating in an ocean of foam.

During all this Charles Gilmore and Edith Harding stood awestruck and fas- cinated. The grand phenomenon which was taking place before them was more sublime and magnificent than anything they had before witnessed, and their hearts were filled with reverence at this wonderful exhibition of the Creator's power.

CHAPTER VII. SHIPWRECKED.

Two days passed. The easterly gale, though somewhat modified in its force, still continued, and the "Euphemia," under close-reefed topsails and forecourse, was speeding on to her destination.

During this time the conduct of Captain Farley had been materially altered, much to the astonishment of the crew. The small stores had been supplied with a liberality unknown before, and, apart from the ordinary occasions, "Grog ho!" had been called in the dog-watches, while his amia- bility to all was remarkable.

On the third night it was the captain's watch, and, contrary to his usual custom, he remained on deck during the whole of it. Shortly before midnight he was pacing the deck in an excited way, when he hailed the forecastle, calling on the watch to keep a good look-out.

Eight bells had been struck, the watch had been called, and the men were slowly coming up from below, and those who had been keeping watch were anticipating a comfortable four hours' snooze when:

"Breakers ahead!" was shouted by the look-out, and all was confusion.

"Starboard!" shouted the captain, "hard a-starboard."

"Starboard it is, sir," answered the steersman.

The barque, as she rose on the mighty sea, gave a sheer to port, and when she reached the crest she seemed to hang back,

as if making an effort to escape her doom, and then descended on to a reef with a crash which made the whole fabric tremble.

All was confusion on board.

"Get out the long-boat!" shouted the captain.

This was done, and the men were hurried into it before they could regain their scattered senses, the painter was cast off, and the boat, under a close-reefed lug, with its living freight, sped forward on the crest of a sea. At this moment there came a break in the clouds, and a gleam of moonlight fell upon the boat.

"Where's Mr. Gilmore and the ladies?" cried a voice.

"Hang Mr. Gilmore and the ladies!" cried Farley "We've got to save our own lives."

"And leave Mr. Gilmore and the ladies to perish? No, no, my lads! Dowse the lug and let us pull back to the ship."

A general shout proclaimed the acquiescence of the men in this suggestion, and the sail was lowered. They were in the trough of a great sea, and as the boat rose on the following billow, the crest curled over and burst on to the boat. This was followed by cries and shrieks, and then all was silent, save for the howling of the wind and the roaring of the billows.

Charles Gilmore was fast asleep in his bunk when the vessel struck on the reef, and was suddenly awakened by the shock. He started up and hurriedly dressed himself, and was about to rush on deck, when to his surprise and consternation, he found that the door was fastened on the outside. The whole horror of his position flashed on him at once. He was a prisoner, and his violent efforts to break open the door were ineffectual. On deck there was the noise of tramping of feet, the confusion of many voices, and the sea breaking over the vessel with terrific violence. All these sounds told him that the danger was imminent, even if escape were possible. He was possessed of more than ordinary strength, and at last succeeded in breaking open the door. The noise on deck had ceased, but to his horror and consternation, there came shrieks and cries from the ladies' cabins, and he knew that Edith and her mother were in the same peril as himself. Maddened by the idea of such treachery on the part of Farley, he sprang out on to the quarter-deck just in time to perceive that the ship was deserted, and to see the long-boat disappear in the gloom.

At this moment a great billow came roaring across the reef, and broke over the barque. Gilmore seized hold of a backstay and clung to it like grim death. The water hissed and gurgled in his ears, and he seemed on the point of suffocation; but as he thought he must give in and let go, the water left him, and he gasped for breath.

More dead than alive he descended to the ladies' cabin, and, after much exertion, forced open the door of their berth and released them.

"Oh, Mr. Gilmore, what shall we do?" asked Mrs. Harding. "Has this happened by accident, or is it treachery?"

"Treachery, no doubt, my dear lady," he answered; "or why were we imprisoned in our cabins?"

Just at this moment the barque was lifted on a monstrous wave, carried some distance on its crest, and then came down with a crash which made every timber in her crack and tremble, and at the same time a deluge of water came pouring down the hatchway.

A few moments passed before they could regain their scattered senses, and then Edith threw herself into Gilmore's arms, crying:

"Charley, dear, is there any hope?"

"None, I am afraid, dearest," he replied. "Abandoned by all but God, it is He alone who can help us."

"And He will," replied Mrs. Harding. "He is just and good, and will not allow the machinations of these villains to prosper."

The poor "Euphemia" at this moment was again lifted from the rocks and carried forward on a huge billow; but this time she did not strike the reef, but had passed over it, and was, in short, afloat in deep water.

Under the influence of a strong flood-tide and these vast Atlantic billows, the vessel had been carried over the reef, and was now, so far, in comparative safety.

"I wonder," said Gilmore, when they had made their way on to the deck, "whether those villains have carried out their intentions and scuttled her?"

"In that case, I suppose, our fate is sealed?" suggested Mrs. Harding.

"I am afraid so."

"Hark!" cried Edith, a short time afterward. "I hear the wash of water in the cabin!"

Gilmore descended the ladder and found at least twenty-four inches of water, and his heart sank within him.

Their doom was sealed. It was only a question of time.

The Falmouth packet "Eclipse," commanded by Lieutenant Grimwood of the Royal Navy—one of those mariners who in times of peace prefer the purgatory of the packet service to the comparative paradise of a comfortable cottage in Kent or Sussex on half-pay—was lying almost motionless on a calm sea. It was the twenty-fourth day of her voyage, and the passengers and crew were in a state of excitement, as the captain had stated that he expected to sight the land that afternoon, and that land was the sunny isles of the Columbian Archipelago.

The untravelled reader knows nothing of the excitement a man feels when, after seeing sea and sky and sky and sea for nearly a month, he first sights the kindly land beckoning to him from over the salt waves. This may be said of any land; but how much more so if that land be tropical!

Yes, the captain's prophecy had come true, and Carlisle Bay, with its fleet of merchantmen, was now just descernible in the distance. It was a beautiful scene in itself, but thrice beautiful to the weary voyager, who deeply feels that the land was made for him.

But at this moment the attention of everybody was directed in a very different quarter. Something had been sighted, but no one could make out what it was.

"I think it's a derelict, and water-logged," said Mr. Northcote, the mate.

"Yes," said a military-looking gentleman, "she is very low in the water, and the mystery is why she does not sink."

"Perhaps she's mahogany-laden, and has come to grief in the last gale," suggested one of the passengers.

"Mahogany-laden! Nonsense!" exclaimed the captain. "If so, what would she be doing in these seas?"

For some seconds the captain concentrated his gaze on the distant object, and then, lowering his glass, said:

"Take a pull of the port brace, Mr. Northcote, and let her come to the wind; we must have a closer look at her, there may be some one alive on board. How's her head now?" asked the captain.

"About north-west, sir."

"Keep her so!"

The shades of evening are falling on the almost placid water of that deep blue sea. The western sky is aflame with the glory of a tropical sunset.

As the "Eclipse" stole along through that soft and shadowy sea, the excitement grew more intense, for it was reported t a flag had been hoisted, indicating t there was some one alive on the derelict.

"I have it!" exclaimed Mr. Northc slapping his thigh with satisfaction. "S the 'Euphemia'! Don't you remem sir?" he said, addressing himself to captain. "There was a paragraph ab her in the newspaper. A man met w an accident and died; but before he d he confessed that the barque was sent out be wrecked. That they had put on bo of her a large quantity of barrels of wat and entered them at the Custom Ho and insured them as Hodgson's Pale A and Read's Stout. The water was to started as soon as they got clear of t Channel, and the ship was to be scuttled soon as they made the land. The fools did think that these empty casks would ke the vessel afloat spite of their scuttling."

"I believe you are right, Northcot replied the captain. "I remember readi the paragraph myself."

CHAPTER VIII. RESCUED.

THREE gaunt figures were standing the deck of the "Euphemia" watching t approach of the "Eclipse." They h been drifting about for many days, ho many they did not know, for they h lost all count of time. More than a wee had passed. A strange sort of languor h been creeping over them. For many da they had not tasted food, and their strengt had begun to forsake them. All hope rescue had left them; day after day the sat staring out over the sea, in a state hopeless despondency. But help was se at last. Suddenly Gilmore uttered a cr and stretching out his hand to the se exclaimed almost inarticulately:

"We are saved! See! here is a vess close upon us!"

Edith jumped up with a cry of thank fulness, her heart beating wildly at th delightful sight, and clasping her mothe in her arms they both shed tears of joy.

But now their transports had somewh subsided, and they stood there watchin the noble vessel which was bearing down t their rescue. Half an hour afterwards boat came alongside, and in a few minute the shipwrecked sufferers were conveye on board the packet, where they met wit the kindness and assistance which wa necessary in their exhausted state.

Tripping daintily down one of the broa

streets that lead from the beautiful Protestant Church of Port of Spain, the capital of the Island of Trinidad, was a coloured lady of some pretensions to beauty, draped in a gay and varied costume, which only a quadroon or a Spaniard could do justice to. She was carrying a parasol of considerable dimensions, and with the front of her dress slightly elevated, showing a pair of small feet and well-shaped ankles.

"Good morning, Miss Nancy!" exclaimed a gentleman in naval costume, with only one swab on his shoulder, who was coming in the opposite direction. "Where have you been to at this early hour of the day?"

"I hab bin out to take de air, sa!" she replied with dignity.

"Yes, but you don't generally do so, so early."

"No, sa," she replied with a benignant smile, "but dis marning I hab bin to de weddin'!"

"Wedding! Whose wedding?"

"Miss Edith Harding, sa."

"And who is the lucky man?"

"Mr. Gilmore, sa, de handsome buckra gentleman as saved her and her modder when de ship was scuttled."

AN UNCONVENTIONAL COURTSHIP.

By LUCIE WALKER.

The sunshine of a June evening falls soft and rich across the broad front of a substantial-looking red-brick farmhouse, with many gables and mullioned windows, and a deep porch sheltering its iron-clamped front door. Before the house spreads an old-fashioned flower-garden, in the formal box-edged borders of which grow all kinds of time-honoured posies: roses and sunflowers, sweet-williams and daffodils, lupins and larkspurs, pansies and London pride. In the shadow of the porch sits a burly, ruddy-faced farmer smoking his evening pipe, and along the white gravel walks, between the rows of flowers, an elderly woman and a young girl are walking to and fro, pausing every now and then in their walk, but never in their talk, sometimes even speaking both at once, so much they have to say to one another after three long years of separation.

"And you really ain't tired, my dearie, after your travelling?" says the elder woman fondly, "and that noisy, shaky train hasn't made your pretty head ache; because if it has you've only got to say so, and you shall go in and go to bed at once. We've got to-morrow and plenty more to-morrows after that to do our talking."

"I'm not a bit tired, Ruth; it really isn't such a very long journey from London, and your lovely tea has quite freshened me up. Besides, I can't wait till to-morrow, I must talk to-night. I can scarcely believe I am here, you know. I had such trouble to persuade father to let me come. Aunt Mary and Aunt Kate were so set against it."

"I know all that without any telling, dearie," said Ruth, nodding her head sagaciously. "I can make a pretty good guess at what they said—how it wasn't fitting that a pretty young lady like you should come and stay with her old nurse in a plain farmhouse, where there's no fine company—and p'raps they wasn't altogether wrong, Miss Elsie, dear, for I misdoubt me, you'll be sadly dull here when we've said our say to one another. You won't want to stay long at Birchetts."

"Shan't I," was the rejoinder; "well, you'll see. I'm going to learn to churn, and to make cheese, and to make hay, and all kinds of things, and that'll take a long time; in fact, I mean to stay all the time father is in California. You know, he has taken an immense contract for some new docks, and he has gone to start the works himself. He'll be away at least three months."

Ruth shook her head.

"The aunts won't let you stay with me as long as that, Miss Elsie," she said.

"The aunts!" repeated Elsie contemptuously; "it's no business of theirs where I am. Anyhow, they don't want me. Their idea was that father should send me to school while he was away—send me to school, Ruth, think of that."

"Well, I never," cried Ruth indignantly, "and you turned eighteen, and taken to long dresses. And what was you to do at school?"

"I was to get a few finishing touches to my education, which is very imperfect," replied the girl demurely, "and I was to be kept in order."

"Ah, yes," went on Ruth, "it's the old story. They called you spoilt and wilful, and maybe you are a bit of both, and p'raps they blamed me for it, and they weren't altogether wrong there neither. But I'd like to know how it could have been otherwise. There was you, a little motherless bairn; and there was master rushing

about, money-making in all directions with his docks and railways, and his bridges and what not, and scarce a thought for you, though he'd no one but you to earn and save for, and no one but poor old Ruth to look after you. Then one 'ud come and another 'ud come and say, 'Ruth, you're spoiling that child, till no one can't do nothink with her,' but they was glad all the same to leave the worry of you to me; and now you've growed up they think I'm not good enough for you; but you ain't that sort, my bairnie; you won't forget me for them as don't care half so much for you." Then she paused for want of breath.

"Of course I won't," replied the girl caressingly; "you know I always do as I like in the end. Father makes a fuss, but I get my own way. I meant to come and stay with you, and here I am till father comes back."

"And so master's got another big contract," began Ruth again after a pause, "another big job of money-making. And to think as I mind him, a poor, struggling young fellow on Rayles and Lyne's works, and when he wanted to marry your poor dear ma, her father was loath for her to make such a poor match. And now he's that rich that he don't know what he's got, and they've made a baronet of him, and he's Sir Mark Newton. La, Miss Elsie, there's a deal to wonder at in the way things turn out."

"So there is, Ruth," said the girl, laughing. "For instance, I can remember a time when you used to say you wouldn't marry the best man in the world, and here you are with a good husband and the loveliest home of your own any one ever saw."

"I've stuck to what I said, all the same," said Ruth, with a patronising look towards the broad-shouldered farmer in the porch. "Cummings is all very well, and I've nothing against him, but I haven't married the best man in the world. I hope he's still looking out for a wife and that you'll get him. And as to the loveliness of the house, that's according to taste; to my mind it's a deal too big for a farmhouse, which it never was meant for."

"And what was it meant for?" asked Elsie.

"It was meant for gentryfolk. It used to be Carnbury Dower House, where the Dowager Lady Carnburys used to spend their widowhood if they were so minded; see, there's the Carnbury coat-of-arms on the porch and in the middle gable."

"And who are the Carnburys?" aske Elsie, as she stood to look at the escutcheor which time had worn to indistinctness.

"Why, missis," said Robert Cumming taking his pipe from his mouth, "hain't yo never told her about the family, and yo born and brought up at their gates?"

"Nay," said Ruth, "why should I h told about them? There's not much good could ha' told."

"There's no good scarcely," replied he husband composedly, "and there's prett well o' bad. Still, they're the oldest gentr in the county, and Carnbury Place is th finest place in the Midlands. See, missy," h went on, getting up and pointing across th garden, "see that long line of trees on th ridge—that's the avenue, it's two miles long the gates are close by here, but the hous is on the other side of the ridge. A gran place it is, or rather was, in the good old days, that'll never come back any more."

"When was that," asked Elsie, "and why won't they come back?"

"That was when I was a youngster, before the big troubles came—though even then the place was mortgaged up to the very weather-cock on the tower. However, they kept it all up in the good old style till old Lord Carnbury died, and Mr. Nowell came to be master. Then it was all up with everything."

"Why, what did he do?"

"What did he do," repeated Cummings, "well, I don't exactly know what he didn't do. The Carnburys had always been wild and reckless, but for wildness and recklessness he went beyond all his forebears. For a year or two there was such goings on at Carnbury Place as had never been heard of, and then all of a sudden his lordship shut up the house and went away, to live on the cheap, I expect, mostly in furrin' parts."

"And has he never come back again?"

"I believe he comes now and again just to see Mr. Smedley, the agent, but no one knows when he comes or when he goes, and no one cares either, for he's no sort of a landlord to his tenants, and all the gentry have turned their backs upon him."

"That's rather shabby of them," said Elsie chivalrously, "now that he is ruined."

"No, it isn't, missy. You see, his lordship's done things that no gentleman can do and look the world in the face afterwards."

"Come, master," said Ruth, "your pipe'll go out if you chatter like that."

"Then I'll light it up again," rejoined Robert Cummings composedly; "if every-

thing could be set to rights as easy as a pipe that's gone out it 'ud be a good thing for such as his lordship. But money and credit and a good name that you've lost are harder to lay hands on than a box o' matches."

"But why doesn't he sell the place?" asked Elsie, "if he doesn't live in it, and has no money to keep it up."

"He have tried to sell it, miss, but it isn't easy to find a purchaser for a great place like Carnbury, and his lordship isn't an easy man to do business with either. We heard once that some London 'gent, whose name didn't come out, was near buying it, but there was a hitch of some sort, and he cried off."

"Or," suggested Elsie, "he might marry a lady with a large fortune."

"He's had a try to do that, too," replied Robert; "in fact there ain't many ways of slipping his neck out of the noose that he hasn't tried. But the Lord keep any good woman from throwing in her lot with his.'

"There, there, Cummings," said his wife, "that's enough, and more than enough, about things that are best let alone. You come along with me, Miss Elsie, and we'll feed the chickens and shut up the hen-house."

"You tiresome old Ruth," said Elsie. "Why do you object to my hearing all about Lord Carnbury? I rather like a bit of scandal, especially when it's about a real live lord. I should like to see this wicked aristocrat."

"You wouldn't get much good of seeing him, dearie; and I'm glad there's no chance you will."

"I suppose," went on the girl, "I suppose you think he would snatch me up, and run away with me, and marry me because I have a fortune. Wouldn't you like me to marry a real live lord, Ruth?"

"I'd like you to marry an honest man, dearie. And I'll give Robert a good scolding for being the one to start this nonsense. He's got no gumption. And now let's drop his lordship and talk of something better, which is easy enough, only while I'm counting the chickens we'd better not talk at all."

Ruth Cummings was not very far wrong when she surmised the possibility of Birchetts proving in the long run a dull abode for her former nursling. Elsie's enthusiasm for the domestic pursuits of a farmhouse cooled down after two or three bouts of churning and cheesemaking, the charm of looking for new-laid eggs in the treacherous dimness of stables and cowbyres wore off, and when she had blistered her hands and freckled her face in the hayfield she began to feel, if not to confess, that she had exhausted the resources of rural life. Never before in the eighteen years of her experience had the days seemed so long and so terribly slow-footed. There were no little excitements to look forward to or to look back upon. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, within reach which one could possibly get excited about. Elsie did not relish monotony. She had no wish that succeeding days should resemble one another. She wondered if the Dowager Lady Carnburys of auld lang syne had ever found the solitude of the Dower House oppressive. Probably they had; but then in those days the big house which now lay deserted behind that long dark line of trees was full of life, and the Dowagers were not totally without distraction. She almost wondered that Ruth had not proposed, considering how scanty the amusements of the farm were, to take her to see Carnbury Place. But so far from proposing it, Ruth had gently put aside the suggestion when Elsie had made it. Why should she put it aside? It was stupid not to make the most of the only noteworthy thing in the neighbourhood, and if Ruth would not take her she would go by herself.

It was not without ground that Miss Newton's aunts called her self-willed. The girl inherited from her father all the tenacity of purpose which had raised him to a foremost position among modern engineers, and she was proud of her inherited characteristic. So one day when Robert Cummings was absent at a neighbouring cattle fair, and while Ruth was engrossed by a heavy wash, Elsie started forth on her voyage of discovery.

At the end of the avenue nearest to Birchetts the lodge was empty; the stately carriage gates looked as if they had not been used for years; the side wicket, through which she passed, swung to and fro without a latch on rusty hinges. Along the neglected drive grass and weeds grew thick, trees lay uprooted here and there on the turf; the broad sheet of water which lay embosomed among groups of beech and elm was choked with water-weed; while in the distance the great stone mansion had the forlorn and deserted air of a house which has stood long uninhabited. There was no one in sight—no one to let or hinder—and Elsie walked boldly on, now and then lingering a little to deplore the desolation

that lay over everything, until at last she found herself at the main entrance of Carnbury Place. For a few minutes she stood looking at the arched gateway in the square tower, with the Carnbury coat-of-arms above it. Then she took her courage in both hands, and went through it into a great quadrangle, where dandelions and daisies blossomed freely between the broken paving-stones, and the untrimmed creepers hung in untidy luxuriance over the heavy stonework. An open window and a big mastiff chained near the gateway were the only signs of life, until, at the furious barking of the dog, a side-door opened and the withered face of an old woman peered cautiously out at the intruder.

"Good morning," said Elsie affably; "are you the housekeeper here?"

"It don't much matter who I am," replied the woman ungraciously, "the question is who are you and what's your business?"

"My name is Newton," answered the girl, in nowise rebuffed; "perhaps you have heard of my father, Sir Mark Newton."

"No, I never have," was the answer; "but supposin' I had, what then?"

"Well, perhaps," replied Elsie insinuatingly, "if you were quite convinced of my respectability, you might show me the inside of the house; I should like to see it so very much. I am staying with my old nurse, Mrs. Cummings, at Birchetts," she added by way of appendix.

"Then Mrs. Cummings might ha' told you that Carnbury ain't a show place, and that if trespassers are caught they'll be prosecuted."

Then the door was shut unceremoniously, and the mastiff, who had held his peace as long as the old woman was visible, broke out into fresh vociferations.

"Be quiet, you disagreeable brute," cried Elsie energetically, "don't bully unoffending people. I've a great mind to climb in at that open window and march all over the house, just to show you and that rude old woman how little I care for you," and she shook her parasol vindictively at the dog.

"If you will allow me," said a voice at her elbow, "I will find you a more convenient way of entering, and will undertake to show you more of the house than you could see for yourself in a burglarious voyage of discovery."

Elsie had turned with a start at the first words, to see a tall, well-dressed man standing bare-headed beside her. He was not very young, and was rather plain than handsome, but there was an air c tinction about him and a tone in his which impressed Elsie as something superior. His clothes, too, were re ably well-cut, and he wore a signe which even to the most inexperience suggested a certain amount of dignity wearer. Elsie observed all this even surprise of her first glance, and as sh a young person who drew conclusion great rapidity and decision, she wa long in identifying her interlocutor own satisfaction. This was, of course- else could it be?—the bankrupt ow Carnbury on one of his mysterious vi his ancestral home.

"I must tell you," he continued, as contradiction of her unspoken th "that my name is Nowell—Gilbert N I am staying here for a few days matter of business, and as I was writing by yonder open window, I your conversation with Mrs. Cartwrig well as your remarks to Bruno. father's name is more familiar to me it seemed to her, so I thought I had come to the rescue."

"Thank you," said Elsie, her rising with the piquancy of the situ "that quite restores my wounded respect. I felt immensely snubbed that uncivil old person jumped or credentials. One doesn't like being sn in the person of one's father."

"Certainly not," replied her comp "especially when one's father is a known public character. I, however, a little of him privately, I heard a deal about him; in fact, I once saw h the time he was thinking of buying place."

Elsie lifted an astonished look t companion's face.

"My father!" she exclaimed, "thi of buying Carnbury! And I never anything of it. How like him. He very closest person you ever met Why, he must be the 'London gent' E Cummings told me about, whose na didn't know. And I actually came out of pure boredom, because there nothing to do at Birchetts, and see wh interesting bit of news I have come ac

Mr. Nowell smiled.

"One might almost quote the well illustration of Saul and his father's a he said.

"Hardly," said Elsie. "I have come upon a kingdom I have been ba of. Dear me," she added, looking

the quadrangle and then bringing her gaze slowly back to her companion, "this makes me doubly indignant. You know, ever since I heard about Carnbury Place—when I came to stay at Birchetts, that is—I have been thinking what a shame it is that such a place should stand empty and go to ruin because the owner of it is such a bad man.'

Then she stopped to see the effect of her attack, but Mr. Nowell only smiled.

"Such a bad man," he repeated. "May I ask if you know Lord Carnbury?"

"No, I do not," replied Elsie very emphatically—after all, if he pretended not to be the owner of Carnbury she need not spare her strictures—"I do not know him, and I do not wish to. But I have heard dreadful things about him, and I know he is a bad man."

"Poor Carnbury," was the answer, "you are very hard on him."

"You don't mean to say you defend him?" said Elsie.

"Well, of course, I stick up for an absent friend, and besides, I think you only know part of his story."

"I certainly don't know it all," replied Elsie severely, "but I believe that the part I do not know is worse than what has been told me. Besides," she continued judicially, "I belong to a class which cannot be expected to have much sympathy with—with——"

"With a depraved aristocrat," suggested Mr. Nowell good-humouredly, as she hesitated.

"Exactly so," she answered. "You see, my father is a hard-working man; he has done all sorts of useful things in the world, and I think—I think, to put it quite plainly, that I rather despise such people as Lord Carnbury."

"Poor Carnbury," said Mr. Nowell again, and this time there was a suspicion of amusement in his tone. "Can't I persuade you to be a little more merciful to an unfortunate man?"

"It makes no difference to Lord Carnbury," replied Elsie, "whether I am merciful to him or not. He has spoilt his own life and done no good to other people, and all the pity I can waste on him will not mend the matter."

"I see," said her companion, "you are only sorry for misfortunes which can be pulled straight again. Now, I think that what cannot be righted is infinitely more pitiful and pitiable. Now shall we go and look at the house which you have just discovered might possibly have passed out of Lord Carnbury's hands into your own?"

He led the way as he spoke through the door by which he had come out, and along a dusky corridor.

"This," he said, throwing open a heavy door at the end of it, "is the great hall. I won't inflict on you the names and dates of the august folks whose coats-of-arms are painted on the windows, and whose portraits look down from the walls; they probably would not appeal to your sympathy. But I think you will agree with me that as an entrance hall it is exceptionally fine. Look at the staircase. It is Italian marble, and the balustrades are Venetian iron-work. Look at the ceiling; it is by Grinling Gibbons. Look at the bay of that window; Queen Anne is said to have admired it. Above all I cannot tell how very jolly it used to be here on a winter evening when that huge fireplace was full of logs, and we sat round and talked nonsense between tea and dinner."

"Were you very frequently one of the party?" asked Elsie.

"Yes," was the answer, "more often than not when there was a party. Carnbury and I were at Eton together. I was his fag."

"Was he good or bad in those days?" continued Elsie with a spice of malice.

"I wasn't overburdened with discrimination in those days, I dare say," was the reply, "and so my opinion doesn't count. Now shall we look at the dining-room? It is quite as imposing as the hall."

From the dining-room he led her to the music-room, from the music-room to the picture gallery, and along the picture gallery to the ball-room.

"I think," said Miss Newton with great decision, as she looked at the broad stretch of irreproachable parquet, "I think father made a great mistake not to buy this place. Fancy the house-warming, with a ball-room like this. It is a perfect crime that such a floor should not be danced on."

"We will put that at the head of Carnbury's transgressions," interpolated Mr. Nowell.

"And moreover," continued Elsie, "I shall insist on his reconsidering his decision. I shall write to him at once. He is in California, you know; he has gone there on business for a short time. If the hitch were merely a question of price, perhaps it can be smoothed over now, because this new contract is to be something specially good. I suppose," she added, "that Lord

Carnbury would even be glad to make some concessions too?"

"I have no doubt he would," replied Mr. Nowell, "for he wants to sell it very much."

While they talked they had walked towards a window which looked out into the park. A dog-cart was coming up the drive, in which sat a grey-whiskered, lawyer-like looking man.

"Ah," said Elsie's guide, taking out his watch, "it is actually twelve o'clock, and there comes Smedley. I have an appointment with him, and I fear his time is too precious to waste, though mine is entirely at your disposal whenever you would like to see the rest of the house. There is the haunted chamber, and the chapel, and the royal suite, and other matters of interest which I should like to show you."

"Thank you," said Elsie demurely, "I think I will take the rest for granted. Good morning, Mr. Nowell. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken."

He stood for a few moments where she had left him, looking after her retreating figure.

"How altogether delightfully fresh and original," he said to himself. "I hope she will not take all the rest for granted. And now for Smedley, who will be decidedly less amusing."

Elsie walked across the quadrangle and under the gateway in the tower, feeling that her morning's expedition had been a success. Outside all looked as quiet and forsaken as it had looked an hour before, but the sense of desolation no longer oppressed her as it had done. She was feeling so cheerful and elated that she could have clapped her hands and sung.

The sheen on the lake and the shadows of the trees looked more tempting than before, and turning her steps across the grass she went and sat down by the water to think matters quietly over.

It was quite the most interesting adventure she had ever had, and it had befallen her just when she had begun to find her surroundings unbearably tame and flat. She was almost grateful to Mr. Nowell for appearing so unexpectedly, and for making a little mystery about himself. How astonished he would be if he could guess that she had seen through his disguise; but really it was too poor a screen for his identity to call himself Nowell, too, which she remembered was the Carnbury family name! Then she recalled with great satisfaction the home truths which she had had so capital an opportunity of telling him. It was rather irritating, however, that he had not even winced; he must be quite void of all sense of shame if, after having spoilt his inheritance and disgraced his name, he could talk so frivolously about himself in the third person.

Then she wondered what Ruth would say to it all. In the first place she would probably be rather cross. Ruth could be cross when she considered it necessary, and Elsie felt that the present occasion was one which would meet with her disapproval. How should she put it to her? Should she say, "Ruth, I have been at Carnbury, and I have seen Lord Carnbury, only he pretended to be some one else"? Or should she give it her in so many guesses? Perhaps she had better leave it to the inspiration of the moment. Making up speeches beforehand was a rather futile proceeding. Besides, her meeting with Lord Carnbury was only part of her morning's adventure. There was the interesting discovery she had made that the "London gent" of Robert's gossip and her father were one and the same person; and there was her own sudden idea — her determination she might call it—that the bargain which had been broken off should be renewed and completed. That would indeed be a surprise for her old nurse. That offered an unlimited vista for castle-building, and would be an unfailing topic of conversation. What plans they would make for the future! Then Elsie smiled to herself. It would be far better fun not to tell Ruth a word about it until it was all signed, sealed, and settled. The castle-building and planning would be more satisfactory then. She would not even mention how she had spent her morning, but she would write to her father that very afternoon. And then she got up and walked briskly down the avenue, feeling very much pleased with herself and the ultimatum she had come to.

"I see Mr. Smedley drive past this morning, master," said Ruth Cummings that evening to her husband. "I wished you'd ha' been there to tackle him about the roof of the barn; he's never taken no notice of your letter."

"He wouldn't take much notice of my speaking either, I reckon," was Robert's reply. "It ain't much good asking about repairs if what I heerd to-day in Wellington is true. They say his lordship's got to

go through the Bankruptcy Court. It seems he'd got a horse in for the Derby, and he'd got thousands on it; and the day before yesterday the animal died sudden like in the stable. And now his creditors have made up their minds they must get what they can out of him."

"Deary me," said Ruth, "they won't get much, I reckon."

"Not unless he could manage to sell Carnbury," replied Robert. "However, he's made his own bed, and now he's got to lie on it as best he can."

Elsie recalled the calm good-humour of her guide. The discomfort of the bed he had made for himself did not appear to try him very grievously.

"What is Lord Carnbury like to look at?" she asked abruptly. "Does he look like a bad man?"

"I scarce know what he's like," said Ruth. "I've scarce seen him since he was a boy. He was no beauty then, but——"

"He's no beauty now," said Robert. "I see him last when old Lord Carnbury was buried four years ago. And what he chiefly looks like is a man that cares for no one and nothing in this world or the next."

This was certainly not a very explicit description, but it did not in any way contradict Elsie's impression of her acquaintance of the morning; moreover, the story Robert had brought home from Wellington explained the whole situation quite clearly. Lord Carnbury had obviously come home to wind up his tangled affairs. Mr. Smedley had been summoned as a matter of course. The oddest part of it all was that she herself should have appeared on the scene, and have declared her intention of becoming the mistress of Carnbury. What a solution to a complicated problem! Lord Carnbury did not deserve such a stroke of luck; he would probably make some unworthy use of it. That, however, was no concern of hers; she would probably never see him again, for, of course, she would carefully avoid Carnbury as long as he stayed there. Robert had said that he never stayed more than two or three days. This was Thursday. She would wait till Monday, and then she would feel safe in making a great voyage of discovery in the park. When she had settled this to her own satisfaction she wrote her letter to her father, and having posted it, she began to look on herself as fairly on the way to becoming the direct successor of the vanished Lady Carnburys.

"I was thinking last week that you was getting quite dull and mopy, dearie," said Ruth, about ten days later, "but you've brightened up again wonderful. You look as merry and fresh as heart can wish, though you've nothing to amuse you, and no one to talk to you but your poor old Ruth."

At which Elsie blushed and felt a little uncomfortable, but made no answer. She had kept her secret diligently, and there was much more of it now than when she had first decided it should be a secret.

"Nothing to amuse her, and no one to talk to." If Ruth knew all about that, instead of commending her for cheery contentment, she would probably lecture her soundly for indiscretion. Yet Elsie was sure she had not been indiscreet. She had waited most discreetly till Monday—till Tuesday even—before she had paid a further visit to the domain she was so anxious to inspect, and then after roaming for a time about the wooded park, she had sat down beside the lake, and had given her mind to the weighty matter of a new boathouse, which would have to be considerably more picturesque than the awkward construction which time and neglect were making still more unsightly.

"And we will have some swans on the water," she said aloud, when she had thought out the architecture of the boathouse, "some black swans, and they shall have their nests on that dear little island covered with rhododendrons."

"Good morning, Miss Newton," said Mr. Nowell's voice suddenly behind her; "I thought I saw you from the terrace. Have you been for a walk in the woods?"

Elsie rose abruptly from her seat, her face clouded over partly with embarrassment and partly with annoyance.

"I thought you had gone away," she said, without returning his greeting.

"I do not know why you should have thought so," he replied, smiling; "I did not say I was going, surely."

"You did not say you were staying either," said Elsie, "and I certainly should not have come marching about the park in this free-and-easy manner if I had thought you were here."

"I hope," he rejoined courteously, "that my being here—and I may be here some little time—will be no check on your walking about as freely and easily as you choose. Indeed, I have been hoping for another glimpse of you. Perhaps I should not have seen you this morning if I had not been looking out for you. Do you know I discovered yesterday that the strawberries are

getting ripe? The beds are fearfully neglected, but the fruit is quite worth eating. Shall we make a raid upon them?"

"I think not, thank you," said Elsie stiffly.

He looked at her with a twinkle of amusement in his eyes.

"Don't you like strawberries?" he asked. "I must say people who dislike strawberries are a living marvel to me."

"I don't dislike them," said Elsie frankly, "but I would rather not go into the garden, thank you."

Then she felt she had been as discreet as any one could desire an unchaperoned young woman to be.

"Won't you sit down again, then?" he said; "I am sorry I disturbed you; you were making some interesting observations to yourself about black swans as I came up."

"Yes," rejoined Elsie, "I was thinking I would have some black swans on this piece of water. You remember, I spoke the other day about my father buying Carnbury. I wrote to him at once and told him how much I wished he would."

"That was very enterprising; and does your father always do as you wish?"

"He does generally; I think he will this time, anyhow."

"I hope he will," replied her companion, "it would be an uncommonly good thing for poor Carnbury."

"I dare say it would," rejoined Elsie contemptuously; "it would give him a chance of acting honestly for once in his life."

"Have you heard," continued Mr. Nowell, taking no notice of her last remark, "that he is more terribly down on his luck than ever?"

"I heard that story about his racehorse," replied the girl, "but it only made me feel cross with him. He ought to have kept clear of such risks."

"That is just what Smedley says."

"And what do you say yourself?" asked Elsie severely.

"I say," was the answer, "that I would like to give poor Carnbury another chance. I hope you won't blame me for not kicking a man when he's down."

Then there was a pause in the conversation.

Elsie reseated herself and began digging up weeds with her parasol.

"How long did you say you are staying at Carnbury?" she asked suddenly.

"I mentioned no length of time, it is uncertain. But as I said before, if you care to walk about the park—and it is certainly the most picturesque bit of the neighbourhood—please do not let my being here prevent you. There is plenty of room for us both, and if by chance we meet now and then, I for my part shall look on it as a charming break in the monotony of my solitude."

"You are very civil," replied Elsie, "and if you are quite sure that there is plenty of room for us both, I think I probably shall come again. I like looking round and making plans for the future."

And she had gone again; she had felt that it would be stupid and prudish to keep away, and she and Mr. Nowell had met several times, always apparently by chance, though once he had brought her a bunch of roses, and once a basket of strawberries, which did not look as if his appearance was purely fortuitous, and he had encouraged her to talk of the alterations and amendments which she considered necessary at Carnbury. Altogether, in spite of the extremely bad opinion she had of him, and of the deception he was playing off on her, Mr. Nowell became a great resource for Elsie in the days during which she was waiting for her father's letter.

It came in due time—the momentous letter—and Elsie, having swallowed her breakfast hastily, took it out into the garden, where she could read it unquestioned and undisturbed. It was short, decisive, and completely overwhelming:

"My dear Elsie," it said. "Yours of the 6th reached me this morning. Its contents astonished me greatly. I cannot go into the reasons which prevented my becoming the purchaser of Carnbury Place. It is sufficient to say that they were excellent ones, and that on no account can I alter my decision, or reconsider the matter. I hope you have not spoken of your extraordinary idea to any one. I should be extremely annoyed if any report of the sort reached the ears of Lord Carnbury or his lawyer. I might say something about the unsuitability of your meddling in such a serious matter of business, but I will not scold you in a letter. But for the future you must remember that such interference is inexcusably out of place.—Your affectionate Father, M. Newton."

This emphatic wording of her father's resolution Elsie read and re-read at least six times, before she could realise that it

was the death-blow of all her dreams and delights of the past three weeks. She had been settling the colour of the curtains in her boudoir, and there had not been the ghost of a chance that she would ever cross the threshold of Carnbury Place again. Her mind refused to grasp the idea. She wished—oh! how she wished—that she had told Ruth all about it from the very beginning. If she had done so she would have had the consolation of talking over her disappointment with some one, instead of having to hide it up and say nothing about it. But she had kept her secret so far, and now her father forbade her to mention it, and there was no one to whom she could turn for a word of sympathy. Unless—well, yes, there was Mr. Nowell; and after all she was bound to tell him her father's ultimatum; she felt sure his stay at Carnbury Place had been prolonged that he might hear it. She wondered if he would betray any of the disappointment he would most certainly feel. He would probably talk of "poor Carnbury," and pretend he looked concerned for his old friend. Anyway, she would go and tell him, he being the only person she could tell. So putting her letter in her pocket, she started for Carnbury in the lowest possible spirits. She did not even cast a glance towards the lake; she walked resolutely on under the tower gateway, into the great courtyard, where the mastiff barked at her as furiously as before, but otherwise nothing happened.

For a few moments she stood looking round. Why did not Mr. Nowell see her and come to the rescue, or why did not the uncivil old housekeeper enquire into the cause of the uproar? But no one stirred, and Elsie suddenly wondered why she had placed herself in such an invidious position.

"Lie down, you noisy brute!" she said vindictively to the dog, and then she turned and walked back in the direction she had come, to meet Mr. Nowell coming briskly towards the house.

"Good morning, Miss Newton," he began cheerily. "Did you not see me as you passed? I was sitting on your favourite seat by the lake. Have you come at last to see the haunted chamber, and to decide what alterations you will make in the domestic arrangements of the Carnbury ghost?"

To his surprise Elsie looked up at him with eyes in which the tears were swimming.

"Please do not make stupid jokes," she said irritably. "I'm not likely to make any alterations in anything at Carnbury."

"I beg your pardon," he said humbly. "Does that mean that your father does not approve of your great scheme?"

"Approve of it," cried Elsie, "he utterly refuses to have anything to say to it. I'm sure he has excellent reasons for his refusal, though he doesn't mention them. People say that Lord Carnbury is a horrid man to deal with, and I dare say my father does not choose to have anything more to do with him."

"I am very sorry you are disappointed," said Mr. Nowell kindly, "but I do not think you should try to think that Lord Carnbury is responsible for your disappointment. Remember, the buying and selling of a place like this is a serious transaction."

"My father," went on Elsie, "hopes I have said nothing which will lead Lord Carnbury or his lawyer to fancy he is going to make a new offer. I have talked about it to no one but you."

"And you may rest assured I have not spoken of it to any one," was the reply.

"I wanted to tell you about it," said Elsie; "and now I think the best thing I can do is to go away and forget all about the castles I have been building for these last three weeks."

"I am going away too," rejoined Mr. Nowell. "I leave here to-morrow morning. But I am not going to try and forget the castles you have built in the last three weeks. I shouldn't succeed if I tried, and I don't want to. I shall think of them, and of you very often, and with great pleasure."

He paused, but Elsie did not speak, or even look at him; she walked steadily on down the avenue, and he walked on beside her.

"I should like you to think of me sometimes, too," he continued. "Indeed, I cannot say 'good-bye' without asking you for something far beyond an occasional remembrance. We have not known one another long, and our acquaintance has been quite unconventional; still it has been long and complete enough for me to make a great discovery concerning myself and you." He paused again, but Elsie still marched unsympathetically along with half-averted face. "Ah, child," he cried, suddenly seizing her hand, and turning her towards him. "It is harder to say than I thought it would be; but now I have begun I will finish—I will know my fate before we part. I loved you the moment I saw you. I can scarcely hope it is the same with you; but do you think

that some day, if I wait, that I may win you for my wife?"

Then Elsie looked up at him. Her face was very pale, and her eyes blazed with passion.

"How dare you," she cried, "how dare you pretend to care for me! You call me child; I am not child enough to be deceived as you are trying to deceive me. I know who you are. I have known all along. You are a wicked, wicked man."

Then wrenching her hand from his she turned and fled, leaving him half angry and wholly dismayed by her passionate outbreak.

"What is it, dearie?" asked Ruth a little later, as Elsie with a tear-stained face rushed past her on the stairs. "Whatever is the matter?"

But Elsie gave no answer, she rushed on into her room, locked the door, and flinging herself on her knees beside the bed wept the angriest tears that had ever burned her cheeks. What an unforeseen end to her adventure! Of course she had known in a vague sort of way that Lord Carnbury would like to find a wife with a fortune, but she had never thought of his trying to secure one in such a barefaced way. What would Ruth say if she knew, or her father? They would probably lay some of the blame on her, and say she had placed herself in a false position. Perhaps he, too, thought she was a bold sort of girl, who need not be treated with much respect. It was too hateful to think of. How she despised him; oh, how she despised him, and then she wept afresh.

Presently the handle of her door was softly turned.

"Miss Elsie, dear," came Ruth's voice coaxingly from the other side. "Won't you let me in. I've got something most particular to say to you."

"I'd rather not hear it," replied Elsie ungraciously; "I've got a most dreadful headache."

"Let me bring you a cup of tea, then—and tell you while you drink it."

"I don't want any tea, and I don't want to hear anything."

But Ruth was not to be daunted.

"I know you're put out, dearie," she persisted, "but there's no sense in locking me out, and I must say my say, if I have to shout it through the keyhole."

Thus adjured, Elsie turned the key, and stood the picture of misery on the threshold.

"My head's dreadful," she said, "I can't talk."

"I don't want you to talk, dearie. I know all you can tell me—at least pretty near all—about what's vexed you."

"You don't, Ruth!" cried Elsie; "how can you know?"

"Well, there's only one way I could have heard besides from you; there's only one person could ha' told tales of you and himself, and he's been and told them. Indeed, he's here now, and it's him that made me come up to you."

"How dare he!" cried Elsie, "and, Ruth, how dare you?"

"Why shouldn't I dare?" asked Ruth, "and why shouldn't he? If he's got the heart of a man he couldn't let you go off like that without trying to see what made you so angry. He's fond of you, dearie, I can see that; and he's set his heart on having you. It's a funny kind of beginning to a courtship; but, la! there's no saying how a courtship can't begin. Did you think he made too free to speak so soon, dearie? You see, he is going away, and it was quite nat'ral."

"Ruth," said Elsie indignantly, "I know you don't speak of Lord Carnbury as harshly as Robert does, but surely you don't want me to marry him—to marry Lord Carnbury?"

"Lord Carnbury, child! You don't mean to say he has been pretending to be his lordship? Well, that was a poor joke! He might ha' thought o' something better than that."

"Do you mean to say," asked Elsie slowly, "that he isn't Lord Carnbury?"

"No, missy, he's nothing but a far-off cousin of his lordship, and he's no more like him than chalk's like cheese."

"Then," said Miss Newton resolutely, "I think I had better go and apologise to him for my abominable behaviour."

Elsie's apologies and Mr. Nowell's explanation of himself and his business at Carnbury lasted a considerable time, and were apparently quite satisfactory, for when at last he took his leave looking extremely radiant, he said to Ruth:

"Thank you for your very effectual help in my perplexity. I am leaving Miss Newton to tell you how we have settled our misunderstanding."

"And I don't think my mistake was so utterly foolish, Ruth," said Elsie, by way of conclusion to the long history which she told her old nurse. "You see, it did look very much as if he were Lord Carnbury keeping himself close, and it was just the sort of trick that a wicked man would try

to play off on a simple-minded person like myself. Besides, probably he will be Lord Carnbury some day, for the present lord isn't married, and he's not such a very distant cousin; and anyhow, he's going to have Carnbury whether he succeeds to the title or not, for he's got lots of money, and he's going to buy it, just to help his cousin out of his difficulties. He actually loves that horrid man for the sake of old times, which shows what a good heart he has. And oh, Ruth, to think how hard I tried to despise him, and you know in my inmost heart I was fond of him all the time. And now I must write to father. I wonder whether he will send the same kind of answer as he did to my other letter? I think I shall die if he does."

But Sir Mark did not send the same kind of answer. He promised to consider the matter when he returned to England, and the result of his consideration was unreservedly favourable.

PENDRED'S PREDICAMENT.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

It had been a blazing September day, and now, in the cool of the evening, three people were lounging in the garden of a pleasant, old-fashioned cottage in the suburbs of Sandport. They were Tom Pendred and his bride of a week, who had come to Sandport for their honeymoon, and Tom's oldest friend, Frank Gaskin. Circumstances had so fallen out that the two men had seen nothing of each other for more than a year until this morning, when they had accidentally met on the parade, neither of them having known of the other's presence in Sandport. In bygone days they had had few secrets from each other, and they were now posting themselves up in all that had happened since their last meeting.

"You have not once mentioned your Uncle Vince's name," said Gaskin presently. "I hope he is well and that you and he keep on the best of terms."

"On the contrary, we are on no terms at all. Four months ago he bade me never darken his door again, and at the same time intimated, with unnecessary exuberance of language, that in the course of the next twenty-four hours my name would be struck out of his will."

Gaskin gave vent to a low whistle.

"You must have played your cards very badly, old fellow, to bring about such a state of affairs as that. But you always had a peppery temper."

"It was all on account of good-for-nothing me," interpolated Pen's pretty young wife.

Pendred was in the act of lighting a cigar. As soon as he had got it well under way he crossed his legs, lay back in his chair, and said:

"As you know already, after my father's death I owed a good deal to my Uncle Vince, and I trust I am not ungrateful for what he has done for me; but when he one day told me with bland complacency that he had chosen a wife for me, and gave me further to understand that he expected me to unreservedly approve of his choice, I must confess that the instinct of rebellion rose up strongly within me. From what I could gather, an old friend of his had just returned to England after a residence of many years abroad, bringing with him a grown-up daughter. Thereupon they had laid their heads together and come to the conclusion that it would be a capital thing if the nephew of one of them should wed the daughter of the other. There was one impediment, however, as far as I was concerned which made any such arrangement impossible, and that was the fact that I was already an engaged man, although my uncle was not aware of it. Well, not to weary you, I may just say that I then and there unfurled the standard of revolt, and that a battle royal ensued between us, with what result I have already told you."

"And you are still at daggers-drawn?" queried Gaskin.

"If you like to term it so. There have been no more active hostilities, simply because we have never met since that day. All the same, I am sorry that he has chosen to take such a course with me, for I have a very genuine affection for the old boy. Under a crusty exterior he hides many fine qualities."

"Is he aware of your marriage?"

"Not to my knowledge. Certainly he has not heard of it through me."

After a little further conversation, Gaskin, who was leaving Sandport that evening, found that it was time for him to go. Pendred proffered to walk with his friend as far as the station and see him off.

They reached the train not a minute too soon, and their last handshake had to be given at once. Then Pen strolled leisurely back to Laburnam Cottage, and found his wife waiting for him at the garden-gate.

Presently Mrs. Pendred sat down to the piano, while her husband proceeded to charge his meerschaum with tobacco. A few minutes later an exclamation broke from his lips, and when his wife turned her head it was to see him standing on the hearthrug, his face devoid of every vestige of colour, and feeling frantically first in one pocket and then in another.

"What is the matter, dear? What are you searching for?" she asked.

"My purse: I cannot find it."

"Perhaps you left it upstairs when you went to wash your hands before going out."

"That is impossible. I had it when I went to the station, because I bought some cigars in Bridge Street for Gaskin to smoke in the train. My pocket must have been picked while I was squeezing my way through the crowd at the terminus."

Husband and wife stared at each other in blank dismay.

"Did it contain much money?" asked Mrs. Pen presently, although she could pretty well guess what the answer would be.

"Every penny I possessed in the world. So ends our honeymoon," he added a moment later with a groan.

"I have a couple of pounds, or thereabouts, in my dressing-bag," said his wife.

"Which will just about suffice to pay our landlady's bill. It's a good thing our return tickets were not in the purse. There's no help for it, dear; we must pack up and be off to-morrow, or next day at the latest."

Tom Pendred's income, as a clerk in the employ of a London firm, was one hundred and thirty pounds a year, and on that income he had been rash enough to marry. The savings of both, with the exception of their wedding-expenses and a few pounds to pay for their honeymoon trip, had been expended on the furnishing of the pleasant little home which was waiting to receive them on their return. Tom's next month's salary would not be due for a fortnight to come. Looked at from any point of view, it was a most unpleasant predicament for a young couple to find themselves in at the outset of their matrimonial career.

Next morning was as bright and sunny as many preceding mornings had been.

"Oh, what a shame—what a pity that we should have to leave this before our holiday is half over!" exclaimed Fanny, as she and her husband leaned over the garden-gate after breakfast, drinking in the fresh sweetness of the scene before them. "Is there no way, none at all, out of our difficulty?"

Her voice broke a little in her own despite as she put the question.

"None that I can see," answered Pen gloomily. "Even if I knew any one of whom I could ask the loan of ten pounds, I don't think that either of us would much enjoy our holiday if it had to be paid for with borrowed money."

"That's true, dear," assented Fan mournfully. "Heigho! I suppose that presently I had better begin my packing."

"No, hang it all, Fan, we need not start before evening. So make haste and put on your togs and we'll have a long, glorious ramble this morning, farther than we have ever been before."

Pen had been alone for a matter of five minutes, when his wife came down the garden with a rush.

"Oh, Tom dear, I've got an idea—such an idea!" she exclaimed. "It came to me all in a moment while I was arranging my hat in front of the glass."

"Is it such a rare thing for you to have an idea that you must take the universe into your confidence in this breathless style?"

"Now, do try to be serious—very serious, there's a good boy. What I want to tell you is this: some time ago I read how three or four young men laid a wager with certain others that they would have a month's holiday at the seaside without it costing them a penny, and further, that they would come back at the end of the time with money in pocket. Well, they won their wager, and this was how they managed it. They all had a fair knowledge of music, and they got themselves up after the style of a troupe of nigger minstrels, going from one seaside place to another, after spending a few days at each. But whether the story is true or not, it has given me an idea. You play the fiddle passably well, and, as you know, I can sing a little. Why should not you and I for the time being become a couple of wandering minstrels—say, for an hour and a half every evening after dusk, and try whether we can't in that way earn enough to enable us to stay out the rest of our holiday?"

"Do you mean that we should black our faces and——?"

"Nothing of the kind, you foolish boy. Did I not say that we would only perform after dusk? There's not a creature in the place who knows either of us, so that we should run no risk of detection."

"But about gathering in the coin—should there be any to gather—who would have to do that—you or I?"

"Neither of us. That is the most disagreeable necessity of the case, and it must be done for us by deputy. We must find a way of arranging for that later on. The question is, what do you think of my idea? Will you agree to give it a trial, or—or is the seven-fifteen train this evening to take us back to London?"

"Upon my word, Fan, your proposition is enough to knock the breath out of a steady-going sobersides like myself. And yet that it's not without its fascinations I admit. But let us set out on our ramble, and as we walk we will consider it more in detail."

The consideration thus involved resulted in Pendred's determination to test the practicability of his wife's scheme. Instead of leaving by the seven-fifteen train, the evening was devoted by them to practising such pieces and songs as they thought would be likely to prove most popular with the general public.

It seemed to Pen that if he did not want to be recognised by daylight as one of the wandering minstrels of overnight, some slight change in his appearance was necessary. A false moustache, a pair of spectacles and a muffler round his throat, would answer his purpose, and, like Fanny's ulster and veil, effectually disguise his personality.

It was at Mrs. Pen's suggestion that her husband sought an interview with a certain mountebank, who, in company with his son, a bright-looking lad of twelve, was in the habit of posturing and tumbling on the beach for the delectation of the idlers there congregated, and the replenishment of his own pocket. As the lad's services were not needed by his father after dusk, a bargain was readily struck between the latter and Pen, by which, in return for a stipulated payment, Micky was "to go round with the hat," as his father euphemistically termed it—in other words, collect whatever coin of the realm our young folk might be able to witch out of the pockets of their auditors. Micky was made a happy boy by having a cheap serge suit and a pair of sand-shoes bought him. Never before had he been so smart.

That Pen and his wife were somewhat nervous as to the result of their unconventional experiment may be taken for granted; but Fanny, like the spirited little woman she was, contrived to effectually mask her own tremors in order the better to cheer her husband, and, indeed, laughed and joked so gaily about the affair, that at length Pen could not help saying, with a suspicion of huffiness:

"I don't believe you have any more nerves than a pair of nut-crackers. Here am I all of a twitter, while you contrive to keep as cool as the proverbial cucumber."

But a surprise was in store for the young couple of a kind they little dreamt of.

In the course of the afternoon their landlady brought in the usual weekly "Visitors' List," which Fanny at once pounced upon. She wanted to see her name in print for the first time as a wife. Her eyes picked it out in a moment, and a secret blush flamed into her cheeks. Presently she gave utterance to a little cry of surprise and dismay which brought Tom to her side. Without a word she handed him the list, her thumb marking a certain paragraph. Tom took it, and even he changed colour when, among the names of those staying at the "Golden Griffin Hotel," he read that of his uncle, Mr. Tidcombe Vince.

"It must be the old boy," he said. "There can't be two Tidcombe Vinces in the world."

"What if he should encounter us on the parade or anywhere!" said Fanny with a dismayed face. "Hadn't we better get away from Sandport at once?"

"Certainly not. Supposing he should meet us, what then? He can't bite our heads off. Most likely he would pass us with a stare and take no further notice. On the other hand, supposing he were to speak, I should seize the opportunity to introduce to him the wife I am proud to have chosen for myself in preference to the one he would have chosen for me."

CHAPTER II.

Not till the shades of evening were deepening over land and water and the lamps in the distance were sparkling like fireflies, did our young people venture to set out on their expedition. Before turning down the gas in their sitting-room they took a final look at each other.

"I don't believe your uncle would know you if he passed you close a dozen times," said Fanny. "That horrid moustache makes you look a perfect fright; and then, the spectacles! But of course I should know you anywhere."

"And I you, darling. Not twenty veils could hide you from me."

Their plan, as already arranged, was to keep away from the sea-front and what might be termed the cheaper parts of the

town—which, in point of fact, were already well supplied with amusements of various kinds—and confine their attentions to the better class of hotels and boarding-houses. Their first essay was to take place in Nelson Square, which stood some distance back in a sort of semi-seclusion, and consisted for the most part of highly genteel lodging-houses, which just now were crammed with visitors. On reaching the square our minstrels found that dinner was in full swing at several of the houses. The evening was so warm that in many cases the windows were thrown open, and sounds of talk and laughter, of the tinkling of glass and the clatter of knives and forks, floated out into the lamp-lighted dusk. Here and there the unshaded windows allowed all that was going on inside to be visible to the passers-by. Pen and his wife wandered slowly round the square in an undetermined, half-hearted way, neither of them venturing to make a suggestion to the other. It was Micky who brought them back to the necessity of either facing their position, or of giving the affair up as a bad job.

"This here's a fust-rate pitch, sir, if that's what you're looking for," he ventured to remark to Pen, coming to a halt as he spoke. "You see, sir, it's a corner, so that you gets the houses both ways and can keep one eye on one side of 'em an' t'other on t'other."

The wisdom of Micky's advice was self-evident. "If we are to begin at all, we had better make a start here and at once," said Pen to his wife.

In the centre of the square was an enclosed shrubbery, against the railings of which, and fronting the houses, our little party took their stand. Then Pen produced his fiddle from its green baize covering and, after one or two of those preliminary ear-torturing scrapes which seem to act as an invocation to the spirit of the instrument, he struck into an air from one of the light operas of the day which nearly everybody just then was either whistling or humming. But Pen had no intention of wearying his audience with anything so trivial and commonplace, and as soon as he had achieved his object, which was to arouse their attention, he brought the air to an abrupt conclusion, following which there was a pause for a couple of minutes, and then, simultaneously from violin and throat, rang out the opening notes of the song entitled "Thy Voice is near me in my Dreams," at that time in the height of its popularity. Mrs. Pen's organ was a full rich contralto, which she managed with remarkable skill, considering that her only teacher had been a broken-down third-rate master. She was a little woman—"a mere armful," as Pen sometimes laughingly remarked—and it seemed marvellous how such a full-throated body of song could be poured forth from so slight and almost fragile-looking a tenement.

Soon figures could be seen at several of the windows, peering out into the night, and when the last note had rung out there was a moment or two of silence, which was broken by an audible clapping of hands interlarded with "bravas" and "encores." By this time, from one point or another, quite a crowd had begun to gather.

Then Pen dashed into a galop adapted from a half barbaric Czech air, which had in it the quality of setting the feet of all young people who heard it pit-patting in unison. This presently died away in a long-drawn wail, and therewith merged into the tune of "Robin Adair." Then Fanny's voice took up the words, infusing them as she went on with an amount of pathos which brought a lump into the throats of many who heard her, and caused the eyes of others to cloud with tears.

Hardly had the song come to an end before Micky, who was of opinion that the show had gone on quite long enough for nothing, slipped away from Pen's side, and began his round in search of contributions. There was nothing of the mendicant's whine about his "If you please, ladies and gentlemen," but a sort of patient wistfulness in the way he spoke the words which of itself was enough to unloosen many purse-strings. From one open window to another he went, cap in hand, and, in nearly every case, his appeal was liberally responded to, Pen, meanwhile, playing a "mélange" of popular airs. After that, by way of "finale," Mrs. Pen gave "O! mon fils," from "Le Prophète." As they moved away, not without a little crowd of followers, a voice from one of the windows called out, "Don't forget to come again to-morrow."

It boots not to follow them further on this the first night of their experiment. It is enough to record that when, at the close, they came to count up their gains, they found themselves a clear sovereign in pocket.

"I think, darling," said Pen to his wife as he kissed her, "that we shall be under no compulsion to bring our honeymoon to a close yet awhile."

CHAPTER III.

On the second evening Nelson Square was again the first halting-place of our minstrels, nor had they any reason to complain of their reception. Thence they made their way to the "Palatine Hotel," the biggest and most sumptuous caravanserai of which Sandport could boast. By this time dinner was pretty generally over, and on the piazza which ran along the front of the hotel were gathered a motley assemblage of guests, who were sitting or lounging on almost as motley a collection of wicker or cane-seated chairs.

Not without certain qualms and misgivings did our young folk make up their minds to face an audience which they might reasonably suppose would prove to be far more critical than any before which they had yet ventured to appear. But any such misgivings were quickly dispelled. So often was Mrs. Pen encored that more than an hour went by before they were permitted to make their final bow.

"And now for the 'Golden Griffin' and Uncle Vince," said Pen to his wife.

The "Golden Griffin" differed from the "Palatine" as chalk does from cheese. It was one of those old-fashioned, intensely conservative, but at the same time quietly comfortable hostelries, of which a few may still be found by those who know where to look for them.

On reaching it Pen reconnoitred the windows carefully. His hope was to find his uncle seated at one of them, nor was he disappointed. "There he is, I should know him anywhere," he said presently to his wife, pointing out a bulky figure seated by an open window on the first floor, one leg being evidently supported by a rest. Uncle Vince was smoking a long clay pipe, his invariable practice of an evening.

As Fanny was singing "Kathleen Mavourneen," Pen could see his uncle's hand beating time softly on the window-sill, and when it had to come to an end he could be observed dabbing his eyes vigorously with his handkerchief. Five minutes later he sent out half-a-crown by the waiter, and asked for a repetition of the song. When that had come to an end, Pen deemed it best to adjourn. "We won't give him too much of a good thing all at once," he said; "we shall be the more welcome next time for not overdoing it now."

That evening their money-takings came to close upon thirty shillings, out of which Micky had a shilling given him for himself.

On the third evening they found Uncle Vince as before, seated with his pipe by the open window. On this occasion Fanny sang, "Auld Robin Gray." As before, he sent out half-a-crown by the waiter with a request that it should be sung again.

So a week sped by, at the end of which the weather broke, the evenings becoming cold and showery. Thereupon a great exodus of visitors set in. But by that time our young people found themselves in ample funds to last them till the end of their honeymoon.

Their success had far exceeded their expectations. They had never missed including the "Golden Griffin" in their rounds, and Uncle Vince had never once been absent from his window, nor had once missed sending out half-a-crown by the waiter.

The evening of their last appearance in public had come.

"I think it is due to your uncle to tell him that we are about to disappear into the 'ewigkeit,'" said Fanny. "If we don't, he may sit and wait for us evening after evening for goodness knows how long."

"Right you are," answered her husband.

Accordingly, when the waiter made his appearance, Pen said to him:

"Will you be good enough to tell the gentleman who each evening has so generously sent us half-a-crown that this is our last appearance, and that if he will favour us by naming any two songs he would like to hear again, we will do our best to please him."

Two minutes later the waiter was back.

"The gentleman's compliments, and will you oblige him by stepping as far as his room?"

For a moment or two both Pen and Fanny were utterly taken aback. Then ensued a hurried colloquy in whispers.

"It would never do for him to see me at close quarters," said Pen. "Those keen eyes of his would penetrate my disguise in a moment. You must face him alone, dear, but you will find me looking out for you when the interview is over."

"But what am I to say to him? What am I to tell him?" demanded Fanny in a flutter.

"There's one thing you must not tell him, which is, that you are my wife. For the rest, you must be guided by circumstances—by the questions he puts to you. If you play your cards cleverly there's no

foretelling what may, or may not, come to pass." With that he squeezed her hand and vanished in the darkness.

"Sit down, my dear young lady, and, John, pour out a glass of sherry," were Uncle Vince's first words when Fanny had been ushered into his room. "But where's your husband, or whatever he is—the young man who plays the fiddle?"

"My brother, sir; he begged that you would excuse him on account of an important engagement."

"Well, well; it's you I want to speak to. What's this I hear about this being your last evening in Sandport? Why's that, pray?"

"Oh no, sir, this is not our last evening in Sandport; our time will not be up for another week. But this is the last evening on which my brother and I intend to sing and play in public."

Uncle Vince looked mystified.

"I don't quite follow you," he said a little testily

"You see sir, my brother and I are not professional people—quite the contrary." With that she went on to enlighten him as to the reason which had first led to their appearing in public. "And now that we have made enough money to see us comfortably through our holiday," she said in conclusion, "we have decided to retire once more into private life."

Uncle Vince lay back in his chair and guffawed heartily.

"This caps everything," he said. "If I had known what your object was, instead of sending you out half-a-crown, I would have made it five shillings, hang me if I wouldn't' But what you have just told me goes to prove that neither of you are very well off, eh?'

"We are rich in health and content, sir, therefore we can hardly be called poor."

"Humph! Plainly put, you both have to earn your living, I suppose?"

Fanny bowed assent.

"And how, pray, do you earn yours, if I may ask?"

"Up till a week or two ago I filled the post of companion to an elderly lady. At present, as you are aware, sir, I am taking a little holiday."

"Do you know, you sing very charmingly."

"I have been told before to-day that I have some small gift that way."

"With such a voice you ought to make your fortune—yes, nothing less than your fortune. Well, now, Miss—Miss——"

"Miss Iveson, sir."

"Well, now, Miss Iveson, I have a little proposition to make to you. You tell me that you intend remaining in Sandport for about a week to come. So do I, perhaps for longer than that. Now, I have taken a great fancy to your singing, a very great fancy indeed. What, then, do you say to coming here for an hour and a half every evening during the rest of your stay, in order to sing and play to me? The remuneration I am prepared to offer you is half-a-guinea a night. If your brother likes to come and accompany you on his fiddle, well and good; if not, there's the piano, and you can accompany yourself. What say you, young lady, what say you?"

"Simply this, sir, that I shall be very pleased to accept your offer; my brother, however, will not be able to join me."

Pen was delighted with the news his wife had for him.

"It is you, darling, who will be the means of bringing my uncle and me together again," he said. "I feel sure of it."

"My dear Tom, you are far too sanguine. Because your uncle happens to be a bit taken with my singing, is that any reason why he should forgive your rash marriage with a tocherless girl? Besides, he would not unnaturally regard himself as having been victimised by a trick."

"But then, you see, dearie, he won't find out who you are, at any rate not till you have had time to creep up his sleeve, and I am quite sure that the more he sees of you the fonder of you he will become; and as for his being made the victim of a trick, you must bear in mind that it is he who has sought you out, and not you him. It was through no design on the part of either of us that he sent for you."

Eight o'clock next evening found Mrs. Pen at the "Golden Griffin." Her husband had escorted her as far as the corner of the street, and would be there in waiting for her on her return. Uncle Vince greeted her with much cordiality. The evening was chilly, but the curtains had been drawn, and a cheery fire burned in the grate. Wine and biscuits were on the table, and, wonderful to relate, for once in a way Uncle Vince had contrived to dispense with his evening pipe.

"I have had the piano tuned for you," he said, "and they tell me it's a very fair instrument—for an hotel. And there's a heap of music for you to pick and choose from. Now, I don't want you to be asking me every few minutes whether you shall

play this or sing the other. I want you to follow your own inclinations in the matter. Perhaps before the evening is over I may ask you to sing one or two old favourites."

The evening proved a scarcely less enjoyable one to Fanny than it undoubtedly did to Uncle Vince. As he shook hands with her at parting he pressed a tiny packet into her palm; it was her promised fee done up in tissue paper. His last words to her were: "You won't fail to come again to-morrow."

And so one evening after another sped by till the end of Pen's holiday was at hand. On the fourth occasion of Fanny's going to the "Golden Griffin," she found there a pleasant elderly lady, whom Uncle Vince introduced to her as "my cousin and housekeeper, Mrs. Askew," and went on to explain that she had come to Sandport for a change prior to their return to London.

This remark seemed to offer Fanny the opening she had been longing for, and presently she said: "Like yourself, Mr. Vince, my brother and I must presently go back to town. To-morrow, I am sorry to say, will have to be my last evening with you."

Uncle Vince's face fell. "It is I who ought to be, and am, sorry, my dear Miss Iveson," he said. "I was in hopes that your stay in Sandport would last as long as my own. Do you know, I believe that your singing and playing have done me more good than all the doctor's stuff."

Next evening there was a surprise in store for Fanny on her arrival at the "Griffin."

"My dear," began Uncle Vince as soon as she had taken off her hat and gloves—he had got into the way of adopting a semi-paternal tone towards her—"my dear, I've been thinking about what you said last night, that this is to be your last evening with us. Now, I think you gave me to understand in the course of our first interview that at the present time you are out of a situation. Such being the case, what is there to hinder you from coming and staying with me and my cousin for a time? I won't press you for an answer now. Think over what I have said and let me know your decision when you come to-morrow."

It was a proposition that fairly took Fanny's breath away.

"Did I not prophesy that you would succeed in creeping up the old boy's sleeve, artful minx that you are?" was Pen's remark when she told him.

"Does that imply that you wish me to accept your uncle's offer?"

"Well, you see, darling, there's a great deal to be said in favour of it."

"I am quite aware of that. But, on the other hand, have you realised the fact that by my doing as he wishes, we shall be parted for an indefinite time to come, and that—and that to-morrow you will have to go back to London and leave me behind? Oh, Tom!" She flung herself sobbing into his arms.

It is not needful that we should follow the discussion further. In the result, it was decided that, however painful a temporary separation might be, it was advisable to put up with it in the hope that through Fanny's good offices some means might ultimately be devised of bringing uncle and nephew together again.

CHAPTER IV.

Uncle Vince stayed on at Sandport for another week, hoping for an improvement in the weather, which never came. Then, one morning, with the abruptness that was characteristic of him, he announced that they would start for London by the noon train.

Fanny at once leapt to the conclusion that her stay with the old gentleman had come to an end, but within a few minutes of his announcement of their departure he took her aside and asked her whether, as a very special favour, she would consent to stay with him and Mrs. Askew for another month, at the end of which time it was his intention to go abroad for the winter. Seeing, perhaps, a little disappointment in her face, he added: "You must stay with me if you can, my dear, in order to oblige an old man who will hardly live to ask many more favours of anybody." His voice quavered a little as he spoke the last words.

Fanny forgot her disappointment in a moment. "Dear Mr. Vince," she said gently, "I will gladly stay with you for another month."

Westray House, where Uncle Vince lived when at home, was situated in one of the outer London suburbs. It was a commodious old-fashioned mansion, standing in its own well-timbered grounds of three or four acres. It had the air of being quite in the country, while yet being well within touch of town. Seven minutes' walk from it brought you to a railway station, whence a half-hourly service of trains ran to the City.

Fanny had at once written to her husband, informing him of her promise to stay another month with Uncle Vince after his return, and Pen in his reply had given his cordial assent to her doing so. During

the month in question it would have been next to impossible for husband and wife to have met, seeing that, except on Saturdays, Pen could not get away from the office before five o'clock, and that of an evening Uncle Vince would hardly let Fanny out of his sight for more than a few minutes at a time, had it not fortunately happened that Pen still had in his possession a duplicate key—originally presented to him by his uncle—which gave admittance by means of a side door into the grounds of Westray House. Accordingly, it was arranged between the young couple that on two nights a week Tom should make use of his key, and that after the rest of the household had gone to their own rooms—Uncle Vince made a point of retiring as soon as the hall clock had struck eleven—Fanny should steal downstairs, let herself out of the house by way of the kitchen entrance, and join her husband for a stolen half-hour under the stars. Sometimes they met only to part again a few minutes later, Pen being under the necessity of catching the last train back to town.

And so the days sped on, without, to all seeming, bringing them a single step nearer the attainment of the special object which was equally dear to the hearts of both. No wonder that at length they began to despair and to tell each other that the scheme on which they had so fondly plumed themselves had turned out a wretched failure.

But presently something happened which Fanny was too quick-witted not to take advantage of. One afternoon Uncle Vince brought home a new photograph album. The old one, which had been in use for quite a number of years, had indeed grown very shabby; so in the drawing-room after dinner he asked Fanny to help him to transfer the portraits from one book to the other, among them, as the young wife was quite aware, being one of her husband. Uncle Vince took up each portrait in turn and brought his spectacles to bear on it for a moment or two before passing it on to Fanny for her deft fingers to insert into the new album. Fan's heart beat a good deal faster than common when at length the old gentleman came to Pen's portrait. He stared at it longer than at any of the others, but when at length he passed it on to Fanny it was simply with an inarticulate grunt. It was rather singular, however, that just at that moment he should find it needful to twitch his spectacles off his nose and rub the glasses vigorously with his handkerchief before putting them on again.

Fanny was gazing at the likeness with a meditative air.

"Whose portrait is this, Mr. Vince?" she asked. "It's a face which I think most people would like—I mean the expression of it. And really, if I may be allowed to say so, it seems to me to bear a quite remarkable resemblance to what you yourself must have looked like at the same age."

"Do you think so, my dear; do you really think so?" he demanded eagerly. Then he seemed to check himself. "It's the likeness of a good-for-nothing nephew of mine," he resumed in a different tone. "Yes, of an ungrateful, good-for-nothing scamp."

Fanny sighed audibly. He glanced sharply at her, but said no more.

And so the days slipped away till three weeks were gone.

Uncle Vince, like many people who have led active business lives, was a man of fixed rules and regulations. "A time for everything, and everything in its place," was one of his favourite maxims, and one which he did his best to reduce to practice. Thus, at ten o'clock precisely every Saturday morning, on which day he never went to the City, he would himself discharge, clean, and reload the brace of big, old-fashioned pistols forming a portion of the stand of arms which decorated the wall space between the two high, narrow windows that lighted the upstairs corridor. Westray House had been twice broken into by burglars, and it was Uncle Vince's whim to have the pistols kept loaded in case of emergency.

One night Uncle Vince's slumbers were broken by a couple of loud reports.

"Thieves," he said aloud, as he sat up in bed. "Carson must have heard 'em and have taken the pistols downstairs with him."

By this time he was out of bed, and having hastily donned a few garments, he emerged from his bedroom carrying a lighted candle in one hand and a poker in the other, only to encounter Carson, the one man-servant who slept on the premises, face to face in the corridor.

"Here I am," said Uncle Vince, in the belief that the man had been on the point of calling him. "Did you hit any of the rascals, or have they got clean away for the third time?"

"Lord bless you, sir, it wasn't me as fired the shots. I thought for sure it was you yourself, sir, a-trying to pot 'em."

Uncle Vince stared for a moment but did not speak. Then his eyes turned to the stand of arms. The pistols were gone.

"Come along," he said to Carson,

"there's some mystery here, and the sooner we get to the bottom of it the better."

The mystery was solved when they reached the dining-room, the door of which was wide open, as was also one of its two windows which gave on the lawn. One gas jet, half turned down, was alight; there were a couple of overturned chairs near the window, and on the centre table, a decanter of wine and another of brandy, to obtain which a door in the sideboard had been prised open.

But scarcely giving himself time to notice these minor details, Uncle Vince's gaze was drawn instinctively to the central figure of the scene, which was none other than that of Fanny, who, clad in a white wrapper, and with her unbound hair flowing loosely about her, lay prone on the floor with outstretched arms. The missing pistols lay on the carpet beside her.

"Heaven bless my heart! what a very remarkable thing!" ejaculated Uncle Vince, and with that he put down his candle, and going forward, stooped and raised the girl's unconscious form. "She's in a dead faint," he said to Carson, who was close behind him. "Go at once and arouse Mrs. Askew."

That lady was quickly on the spot with restoratives, and before long Fanny opened her eyes and stared around in bewilderment. Uncle Vince patted her on the shoulder.

"You are a very brave girl, my dear," he said; "I think you told me once that you are an officer's daughter; and to you I owe it that the house has not been ransacked. I hope to goodness that you hit the miscreant, and that he will carry your bullet inside him as long as he lives!"

Fanny shuddered and covered her face with her hands.

"But not a word more now," continued the old man. "Cousin Askew, will you conduct Miss Iveson back to her room, while Carson and I take a squint round the premises?" With that he bent and touched Fanny's forehead with his lips and patted her again on the shoulder.

"It's as plain as a pikestaff," said Uncle Vince to his man twenty minutes later. "I can see how it all happened as clearly as if I had been a looker-on. The girl's room is just over this one. She hears a noise for which she can't account. She gets out of bed and listens. She leaves her room and steals downstairs, bringing the pistols with her. Then she opens the door and surprises the scoundrel—maybe there was more than one of them—then she fires, in order to frighten them, and they take to their heels at once. Oh, I can see it all!"

"As you say, sir, a very brave young lady."

"One in a thousand, Carson; one in a thousand. In the morning we must put the matter into the hands of the police."

Two days later, during which the old gentleman seemed at a loss how to make enough of her, he said to Fanny: "I wish with all my heart, my dear, that you could have spent the winter abroad with me and my cousin; but that is quite out of the question, I suppose?"

"Quite, dear Mr. Vince. On no account can I be spared from home any longer."

Uncle Vince gave vent to a grunt of dissatisfaction. Then, after a brief pause, he said:

"If we must part, there's no help for it, but before we separate you must tell me what I can do for you. Young ladies' heads are said to be stuffed full of whims and wishes of various kinds, so you must let me know what your particular wish or whim is just now, and then let me consider whether I can't help you to its fulfilment. Speak out and don't be afraid."

Fanny's resolve was taken in a moment. There was a low stool close by Uncle Vince's chair on which he sometimes rested his gouty foot. Perching herself on this, she took one of the old man's hands in hers and laid her cheek caressingly against it.

"Dear Mr. Vince," she said, "I have one very special wish, the fulfilment of which rests entirely with yourself."

'Ay, ay, my Bonnybell, and what may that be?"

"That you should become reconciled to your nephew—that you should send for him and tell him you have forgiven whatever he may have done to offend you in the past, and take him again into your favour. Pardon me if I seem over presumptuous, but my woman's instinct tells me that in your heart you still love him as if he were your own son. Let bygones be bygones, and make me happy before I leave you in the knowledge that you have done something which will render you a happier man to the last day of your life!"

Uncle Vince squeezed the hand that was holding his very hard indeed. Three times he cleared his voice before words would come, then he said, speaking somewhat huskily:

"Yours is a strange request, my dear, and had it been made by anybody else they would have had the rough side of my tongue for their pains. But you!—well, I hardly know how to refuse you anything.

I'll think it over—yes, I'll think it over. But he's a sad scamp, that nephew of mine, and how my making things up with him should cause you to feel one whit happier caps me beyond measure. But there! your sex were always riddles to me, and I suppose they always will be."

This happened on Friday. Next morning Pen found the following laconic epistle awaiting his arrival at the office:

"NEPHEW TOM,—Come and dine with me next Sunday. I wish particularly to see you.—Yours as I shall find you,

"TIDCOMBE VINCE."

As a matter of course Miss Iveson and Tom met as strangers, and as such they chatted together while dinner was in progress. Uncle Vince watched them keenly from under his shaggy eyebrows, and now and then, when no one was looking, he chuckled softly to himself. When the meal was over and the ladies had left the room he said: "Draw up your chair, nephew Tom. But first bring that decanter of port from the sideboard; I'll venture on a couple of glasses to-day in spite of my medico's orders."

His manner towards his nephew, while perfectly friendly, lacked the affectionate cordiality of old times, as Pen felt with a pang. Pen began to wonder more and more why his uncle had sent for him. Suddenly, however, with one of his abrupt turns, the latter said:

"And pray, young man, what is your opinion of Miss Iveson?"

Pen felt the hot colour mount to his face, but he answered steadily enough:

"She seems to me in every way charming."

"I am glad to find that for once your views coincide with mine," replied Uncle Vince a little grimly. "But, maybe, you won't think her quite so charming when I tell you that I have come to the conclusion to make her my heir, or rather heiress, vice yourself deposed."

"Oh!" was all that Pen, in the extremity of his amazement, could find to say.

"But it was not altogether to tell you this that I sent for you," resumed his uncle. "I have not forgotten that you are my sister's son, and although you chose to run counter to my wishes on a certain occasion, I am willing to forget and forgive the past on one condition, which is, that you marry Miss Iveson—provided, of course, that she will have you. I see the flutter of a petticoat in the garden. Away with you, and come back to me in an hour with your answer one way or the other."

Pen quitted the room like a man in a waking dream. He found his wife in the shrubbery.

"Well, now—well, is it to be yes or no?" demanded his uncle, with an eagerness he could not dissemble, when Pen rejoined him.

"It is to be yes. Miss Iveson and I, I am happy to say, sir, have arranged matters between us to our mutual satisfaction."

"That's good news—that's the best news I've heard for many a day."

"There's only one thing stands in the way, but it's a mere trifle."

"Eh! and what may that be, pray?" darting a suspicious glance at his nephew.

"Merely, sir, that before I can marry again I must contrive, by one means or another, to get rid of my present wife. But, as I said before, that is a detail."

Uncle Vince lay back in his chair and began to turn purple in the face. Pen made a stride forward. Was it possible that he had carried his joke too far? There is no saying what would have happened next had not Fanny, who had been waiting outside, rushed forward on the instant, and going on her knees before Uncle Vince, grasped both his hands in hers.

"Oh, forgive us!" she cried; "not only him, but me! We are already married. I, and no one else, am your nephew Tom's wife. Will you not let me call you uncle?"

By this time Tom was by Fanny's side. Uncle Vince's eyes wandered from one upturned face to the other, while his mind seemed to be slowly taking in the astounding news just imparted to him. There was a brief space of silence, then lifting his hands and placing one gently on the head of each, he said solemnly:

"I thank Heaven for this!"

But what Uncle Vince never knew was that the bold burglar who broke into Westray House was none other than his scapegrace nephew, that the scheme was concocted and carried out by him, as a last resource, in order to give Fanny a strong claim on the old man's gratitude, and that it was his hand, and not hers, which fired off the pistols before making his escape through the open French window. But Fanny's fainting fit was real enough. At the last moment her over-wrought nerves had given way.

The Right of Translating any of the Articles contained in this Number is reserved by the Authors.

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To Remove Shine from Cloth.—Cloth which has become shiny-looking may be restored to its former appearance by being rubbed with turpentine. Use very little turpentine and rub the cloth very hard, going over and finishing a small portion at a time. The smell is disagreeable while it lasts, but this soon evaporates upon exposure to the air. Ammonia employed in a weak solution will also have the same effect; but it is not so good, being liable to turn the cloth brown.

Two Good Soaps.—How fast scraps of soap accumulate! From bedroom, bath-room, kitchen, and laundry may these small scraps be gathered; and the question soon arises, how shall they be used with the least time and trouble? Now, here is where the whitening of the hands comes in. Are we not told, over and over again, that oatmeal will help to keep the hands soft and white, if used thoroughly and systematically? Yet how many of us will take the trouble to have the meal at hand, where it will not be forgotten? And what a nuisance it is dropping upon the carpet and the washstand. Wait until you have collected a nice little pile of soap-scraps that are too small for any other use. See that they are all scraps of good soap that will not injure the skin. Take a tea-cupful of boiling water for each half-cupful of scraps, set it on the stove, when the last small scrap has been dissolved stir in oatmeal while the water is still boiling, and thus form a stiff batter. A few drops of scent may be added, if desired. As soon as the batter becomes stiff, grease an old dish and pour the mixture in it. Just before this becomes hard and dry, cut it into cakes, and when they harden, you will have an excellent soap for keeping the hands smooth and white. This is especially desirable where the youngsters come home from school with grimy, inky fingers that seem to defy all common toilet-soaps to get them clean. With this rough soap, with its whitening properties, they are clean and soft in a surprisingly short time. For using up scraps of the common scrubbing-soaps, they may be dissolved in the same way, only using less water in proportion to the scraps; and when the substance is nearly cold, stir in a quantity of bath-brick, or fine scouring sand, and, when it is thick, allow it to cool and harden. This may be used for scouring tins, the kitchen sink, etc.

Boycotted.—Some weeks ago, at Salzburg, a fine-looking young man, after being assiduously courted by all the mammas, suddenly found himself an object of aversion. Everywhere people went out of his way, and the coffee-houses were deserted by their customers as soon as he appeared on the scene. One evening he went to a performance in aid of some charitable institution. The house was full long before the play commenced; but the audience cleared out in less than five minutes. The young man, annoyed at these demonstrations, stopped one of the runaways and asked him why he was treated in that manner. "Sir," was the reply, "we got to know that you come from Hamburg and——" "Well, what of that?" "That you come from Hamburg, and on account of the cholera——" A shout of laughter interrupted this speech, and our young man reassured the speaker by saying: "My name is Karl Hamburger, property owner, from Vienna, and I have never been to Hamburg in my life!"

Round Shoulders.—This is one of the commonest deformities from which otherwise good-looking girls and women suffer. Even those who have the best natural figures frequently show this tendency, unless they take care to prevent it, especially if their work is of such a kind as to entail much practising of the piano, bending over a machine, or sitting at a desk. It requires some effort of memory not to fall into a stooping position when engaged in such occupations, but it is possible to train oneself to sit almost upright even under these circumstances, and whenever walking out of doors the figure should be drawn up straight, the chin kept up, and as I used to hear a teacher of dancing say, "A girl should never be able to see her buttons." When walking in an erect position much less fatigue is felt, because the lungs are fully expanded, the blood better aerated, and the circulation freer. A good exercise is to raise oneself to the tips of the toes slowly; the heels should be together, the toes at an angle of forty-five degrees; the arms should be straight down by the sides, but should rise gradually as the body is raised to the tip of the toes, a slow breath being drawn meanwhile. Maintain the position on tiptoe with the arms extended as long as possible, then sink gradually, the arms dropping slowly at the same time, and the air being gradually expelled from the lungs. This should be repeated several times a day.

Learning to Walk.—Infants should not be allowed to walk until they make voluntary efforts to do so, for when the muscles are strong enough, Nature prompts them to imitate the movements they see in others; but after natural walking and running about has been practised during the first few years of life, and sedentary occupations begin to take the place of the active life of the young child, it is desirable that children should be taught to practise walking, and dancing lessons may be given. Children who learn to walk with grace and dignity while they are very young, will retain a good carriage in later years. Children should always be taught to walk in an upright position with the head up and the chest thrown out. If in young children the chest does not expand properly, the bones grow in length but not in thickness, and bow legs or knock knees may follow, while curvature of the spine, or what is popularly known as growing out of the shoulder, is the frequent result.

Polishing-Paste for Furniture.—Nothing is more requisite in saving labour in a house than a good furniture polish. The following is a most excellent preparation that can be very easily prepared as follows: Take three ounces of white wax and shred it very finely; then add a gill of turpentine, and let it stand for forty-eight hours. Boil half an ounce of castile soap in one gill of water, and add the other ingredients, stirring all the while with a wooden spoon or a piece of wood. When cold, it will be ready for use. When using, pour a small quantity on to a piece of flannel, rub briskly over the furniture, and immediately polish off with dusters before time has elapsed for it to dry in Comparatively little rubbing is required. This is a most excellent polish for furniture in any wood.

Remember that consumption is an infectious disease, communicated principally by the matter coughed up and expectorated. A consumptive should sleep alone, and, if possible, in an airy and sunny room. Have a separate bed and table linen; these should be boiled before washing. Use individual table utensils, washed separately. Those who are well should remember that it is an infectious disease, communicated principally by swallowing the germs, by inhaling them, or having them introduced through a wound. Therefore, do not buy or use food that has been handled by a consumptive. Do not share the food or drink of a consumptive. Do not sleep with a consumptive. Do not kiss any one on the lips if they have a cough.

Perhaps few stories of battle so thoroughly illustrate what we are pleased to consider the true British spirit and way of doing things as the little incident of a reconnaissance before the battle of Ulundi, of which Lord William Beresford was the hero. The British were almost led into a terrible trap, and discovered the danger only just in time. They turned to retreat, and the Zulus poured in a volley which brought down the grey horse of a mounted infantryman. His rider fell head-foremost. The rest thought both man and horse were killed at first, but the former soon struggled to his feet, with his face covered with blood, and dazed with his fall. Lord William Beresford, seeing what had happened, pulled up, and, in the face of advancing hosts of yelling savages within easy range, quietly trotted back, and told the man to mount behind him. With a cool courage scarcely second to Lord William's, the man refused, noble fellow that he was, preferring the certain sacrifice of his own life to the probability of destroying his preserver. The reply was admirable, terse, and telling. The savages swarmed closer and closer, bullets rattled around them; the two who lingered were almost within reach of the assegais, when Lord William replied: "Get up, or I'll punch your head!" The man obeyed, and rescuer and rescued escaped.

Cleaning Oil-Cloth.—Never use soda or very strong soap in cleaning oil-cloth, as this will bring the paint off or cause the pattern to fade out more quickly than anything else. First, sweep the oil-cloth quite free from dust, then wash it carefully with warm, but not hot, water, as this also causes the paint to come off. Always dry a piece as quickly as it is possible after it has been wetted. When thoroughly dry, take a good-sized piece of dry flannel, dip it in linseed oil, and rub the surface of the oil-cloth as hard as possible with it. This will impart a fine gloss to the oil-cloth, and it will not require cleaning nearly so often.

To Render Clothing Fire-Proof.—If the water in which the clothes are rinsed has an ounce of alum dissolved in every gallon of water, it will render all garments that may be rinsed in it practically uninflammable, or, at least, render them so slightly combustible that were they to take fire they would burn very slowly. Of course, it is only necessary to add the alum to the last water. This is a very necessary precaution to take with the clothing of little children, especially during the season of fires.

SUMMER HEAT AND OBESITY.—Summer, with its sultry heat, is not a source of unmixed pleasure to those who suffer from excessive corpulence. Health cannot be maintained under conditions of great obesity. In general the mental energy of the highly corpulent becomes impaired, and their capacity for the conduct of business is consequently much diminished. Our readers will therefore be interested to know it is an indisputable fact that excessive corpulency can, in all cases, be cured by the system which has now for many years been successfully practised by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Mr. Russell possesses hundreds of testimonials from persons in all classes of society, many of them holding distinguished positions in the learned professions and in Her Majesty's services, which, taken collectively, prove to a demonstration that any one suffering from obesity who systematically applies his remedy for a few weeks consecutively can be cured. The patients under his treatment are not asked to be "fasting men," and it is remarkable that in the case of many of Mr. Russell's subjects their appetite increases as their weight diminishes. A pamphlet containing two hundred and fifty-six pages of most interesting and trustworthy information, together with the recipe, may be had by writing to Mr. Russell, enclosing six penny stamps for postage. With such a remedial agent as Mr. Russell's specific, excessively corpulent persons have only themselves to blame if they are not speedily reduced to fitting proportions.

The following are extracts from other publications:

SHOULD STOUT PERSONS STARVE THEMSELVES?—We are afraid that semi-starvation as a cure for corpulency prevails very much to a dangerous degree. Mr. Archer, the late well-known prominent jockey, was in the habit of going without food for a long stretch in order that he could ride a certain horse at its weight, and there is not much doubt that the debility resulting from this habit of abstemiousness was certainly not conducive to combating the dire attack of fever which was perhaps indirectly responsible for the untimely end, in the zenith of his fame, of this unfortunate but accomplished horseman. Even Mary Jane in the kitchen will eat sparingly of the food allowed her, while she will seek to reduce her fat by copious draughts from the vinegar cruet, and succeeds only in injuring the coats of her stomach—the forerunner of dyspeptic trouble which will be difficult to overcome. The Continental medicos seem to advocate this great reduction of ordinary foods, but one of these savants suggests that the stout person should eat considerably of fatty meats in order that the appetite be appeased, and consequently less food required, so that practically this is indirectly advocating semi-starvation. On the other hand, Mr. Russell, the British specialist, takes a different course. He says: "Eat as much as you like," and as it is an acknowledged fact that under his treatment persons lose from two to twelve pounds per week it beyond doubt stands out pre-eminent against those so-called starvation cures "made in Germany." Some claim that Mr. Russell has to insist upon his patients drinking hot water every morning, but on the contrary, he avers that it is dangerous to do so, and has, of course, never advised it. No; the success of Mr. Russell's treatment is incomparably beyond other specialists, for he resorts to no stringent dietary, and simply prescribes a harmless vegetable tonic combination, which is the outcome of years of study and botanical research. We advise all those interested in this question to get this book, the price of which is only sixpence. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (two hundred and fifty-six pages), and is published by him at Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C. It can be had direct or through any bookseller.—"The Million."

GOOD NEWS FOR STOUT PERSONS.—It does not follow that a person need to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that any one can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but this is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as fourteen pounds in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book (two hundred and fifty-six pages), only costs sixpence, and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really well worth reading.—"Forget me-not."

BEAUTY BATHS were very much in favour amongst French ladies of bygone years. Madame Tallien used to take a bath prepared of strawberries and raspberries, twenty pounds of the former and two of the latter being crushed and thrown into the bath. This had the effect of rendering the skin very soft, and delicately tinged with pink, while giving it a beautiful perfume. Those who live in the country may indulge in a spring bath prepared from cowslips or wild primroses, three handfuls of either being thrown into the bathful of water. This perfumes the skin and is very soothing both to it and the nervous system. Half a pound of crystals of carbonate of soda, two handfuls of powdered starch, and a tea-spoonful of essence of rosemary added to the bath makes it strengthening and soothing, and particularly valuable when one is suffering from acidity, nettle-rash, or other irritating eruptions of the skin.

A VERY good story is told about Jacob Tome, the millionaire bank president, who the other day left a package containing sixty thousand dollars in bank-notes lying on a car seat. As is well known, his wealth, which is estimated at several millions, was accumulated by hard work and shrewd investments. He started life on a raft, and at one time during his career was an ostler in Maryland. Some time ago, so the story goes, a friend of his, who had been a fellow-ostler in Tome's early days, and who had never risen above that, approached him for the loan of two hundred and fifty dollars. The demand for security incensed Mr. Tome's friend, who, turning to him, said: "Why, dang it, Jake, weren't you and I ostlers together?" and received the reply: "Yes, and you're an ostler still."

WASHING DAY COLDS.—If washing day were expurgated from the week, most housekeepers could go through the year without a cold. Faint with fatigue, and with every pore opened by the steam from the boiling suds, women go and hang out the clothes, perhaps standing in the snow and slush until their feet are numb. One alternative is to let the clothes lie in the basket until after dinner, when, with less exhaustion, there will be less liability to a chill. This is where the advantage comes of having a sitting-room separate from the kitchen, for then the work can be taken more leisurely and with less confusion than when there must be a grand clear-up for every meal, putting work out of sight temporarily, or hurrying it to a forced completion.

WASHING-UP.—In many kitchens the washing-up assumes dreadful magnitude in the cook's eyes. In fact it is the "bête noir" of her existence, and small wonder, for she seems always to have a collection of pots, platters, and pans. If, however, she could only be persuaded to practise the old domestic theory of "Clean as you go," she would never be inundated with washing-up, and half the muddle in the kitchen would be done away with. Besides which, articles that are washed up directly they have been used are not half the trouble, because instead of the remains of the contents having become incrusted on to the saucepan they are fresh from cooking, and can then be very easily cleaned. Directly the contents have been emptied from the cooking utensils, be they saucepans, stew-pans, frying-pans, or otherwise, they should be refilled with water and a little soda, and stood on the grate to soak and for the water to heat. They can then be expeditiously washed, rinsed, dried, and put away.

CLEAR TOMATO SOUP.—One pound of tomatoes, a quarter of a pound of ham, four tablespoonfuls of corn-flour, two tablespoonfuls of butter, an onion, bay-leaf, two teaspoonfuls of sugar, and a palatable seasoning of salt and pepper. Put the tomatoes in a granite or a porcelain-lined kettle; add to them a quart of water, the ham, bay-leaf, and onion; cover the saucepan and cook slowly for fifteen minutes, then strain through a sieve sufficiently fine to remove the seeds. Return the soup to the saucepan. Moisten the corn-flour in a little cold water, add it to the boiling soup, stir continually till it thickens, add the sugar, soda, salt, pepper, and butter; stir until the butter is melted and thoroughly mixed with the soup.

IMITATION GROUND GLASS.—Dissolve two ounces of Epsom salts in half a pint of beer, and apply it to the glass with a small sponge. As it becomes dry it crystallises, and forms a good imitation of ground glass.

DON'T SWEEP—or allow your servant to—with the broom in front of you, as though you were shovelling the carpet. As sure as you do, the dust will rise to the ceiling, and you will dig the nap from the carpet and shovel it up in the dust-pan. More carpets are worn out by hard sweeping than by regular "wear and tear." Sweep with a downward regular stroke, keeping the dust under the broom. Wring out a house flannel in ammonia water, and wipe over your carpet after the dust has settled, and see how clean and bright it will look.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

Bilious & Nervous Disorders,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,

Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion

Disordered Liver, & Female Ailments

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.
The 1s. 1½d. Box contains Fifty-six Pills.

The **SALE** is now **SIX MILLION BOXES** Per Annum.

Prepared only by the Proprietor—

THOMAS BEECHAM, ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS AND PATENT MEDICINE DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

Towle's Pennyroyal and Steel Pills FOR FEMALES

Quickly correct all irregularities, remove all obstructions, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex.

Boxes, **1/1½** & **2/9** (the latter size contains three times the quantity), of all Chemists, or will be sent anywhere on receipt of **15** or **34** stamps by the maker, E. T. TOWLE, Chemist, NOTTINGHAM.

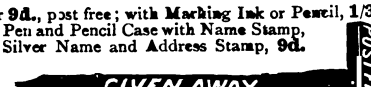
Beware of Imitations injurious and worthless

GIVEN AWAY

REVULCANISED GOLD MEDAL RUBBER STAMPS.



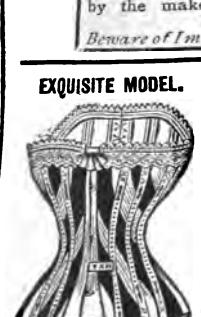
Your Name, your Monogram, bottle of Embossing Ink, two Pads, Box, and Brush for **9d.**, post free; with Marking Ink or Pencil, **1/3** Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, **6d.** Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, **9d.** Watch Case, beautifully chased, with Name and Address Stamp, **1s.**; and every other description of Rubber Stamp half-price. Send for List. Agents wanted. Address to **Crystal Palace (John Bond's Daughter's) Gold Medal Marking Ink Works, 75, Southgate Road, London, N**





CAUTION.—The Original and Genuine Ink Label has th trade mark, "CRYSTAL PALACE."

EXQUISITE MODEL.



PERFECT FIT. GUARANTEED WEAR.

Y & N PATENT DIAGONAL SEAM CORSET.

Patented in England and on the Continent.

Will not split in the Seams nor tear in the Fabric.

Made in White, Black, and all the fashionable colours and shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil. Also in the New Sanitary Woollen Cloth.

☞ **4/11, 5/11, 6/11, 7/11**

PER PAIR, AND UPWARDS.

Three Gold Medals.

Caution.—Beware of worthless imitations. Every genuine Y & N Corset is stamped "Y & N Patent Diagonal Seam, No. 116" in oval on the lining.

Sold by the principal Drapers and Ladies' Outfitters in the United Kingdom and Colonies.

JEWSBURY & BROWN'S

ORIGINAL & ONLY GENUINE

Oriental

CLIMATE PROOF **Tooth** SIXTY YEARS IN USE

CAUTION.

THE GENUINE ONLY IS SIGNED **JEWSBURY & BROWN.** **Paste**

All Perfumers and Chemists. 1/6 & 2/6 Pots

Crosse & Blackwell's

PURE MALT VINEGAR,

In imperial pint and quart bottles,

IS SOLD BY ALL GROCERS AND ITALIAN WAREHOUSEMEN.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, Limited, Soho Square, LONDON.

SULPHOLINE LOTION

SHILLING BOTTLES.

A Spotless Skin. A Beautiful Complexion.

PEPPER'S TONIC

QUININE AND IRON

2s. 6d. Bottles. Sold Everywhere

GIVES
Great Bodily Strength!
Great Nerve Strength!
Great Mental Strength!
Great Digestive Strength!

Promotes Appetite. Cures Dyspepsia, Hysteria, Nervous Complaints, General Debility.

LIEBIG "COMPANY'S" EXTRACT OF BEEF

Is the finest Meat flavouring Stock for Soups, Sauces, Made Dishes, &c.

J. Liebig

Genuine only with **Blue Signature** across the Label.

Sole Manufactory: FRAY BENTOS, S. AMERICA. Cookery Books (indispensable to Ladies) **Post Free** on application to

LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT CO. Ltd., 9, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.

F. M. EVANS & CO., LIMITED, CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER. The best that money can buy.

Third Series

AUGUST, 1894.

CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED July 7, 14, 21, and 28.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 67.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Married to Order. A Serial Story	1, 25, 49, 73
Days in Delhi	6
The Black Death	11
Kattie's Wedding. A Complete Story	14
The Pleasures of Mystery ...	18
The Old Road to Oxford ...	31
The Story of a Postcard. In Three Chapters	36, 69, 92
The Colour of the Sea	40
Off Beaten Tracks in the Lake District	54
Dr. Meredith's Assistant. A Serial Story	21, 42
Poppies. A Poem	60
The Mill of Minnony. A Complete Story	60
The Freeland Colony Scheme	65
Down at the Salt Water. A Complete Story	79
An Arctic May-Day	84
On Some Advantages of Standing Armies	88

Price NINEPENCE.

1894.

LONDON

12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C.

Nos. 288 to 291

RIDGWAYS' TEAS. OF QUALITY & VALUE. KING WILLIAM ST., CITY, & BRANCHES. Also AGENCIES IN MOST LARGE TOWNS.

Creates Appetite. GUARANTEED BITTERED FROM HOPS ONLY.

AUP'S ALE AND STOUT

MEDE'S FOOD FOR INFANTS



NALDIRE'S
PRIZE MEDAL
DOG SOAP
(Free from Carbolic Acid and all other poisons)

Destroys all Irritating Insects, Removes Doggy Smell, Improves the Coat, and leaves the Animal a Refreshed and Happy Dog.

"Naldire's Soap is Harmless to Dogs, but Fatal to Fleas."—**FRANK BUCKLAND.**

NALDIRE'S Prize Medal SOAP.

Of Chemists, Perfumers, or Stores.



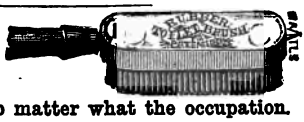
BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH
AND
WASHING GLOVE.

Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED **Rubber Bath and Flesh Brushes,** price **5s.** each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON;

Ardwick, Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.

EPPS'S COCOAINE

COCOA-NIB EXTRACT.

(Tea-like).

The choicest roasted nibs (broken-up beans) of the natural Cocoa on being subjected to powerful hydraulic pressure, give forth their excess of oil, leaving for use a finely-flavoured powder—"Cocoaine," a product which, when prepared with boiling water, has the consistence of tea, of which it is now, with many, beneficially taking the place. Its active principle being a gentle nerve stimulant, supplies the needed energy without unduly exciting the system.

Sold in packets and tins, labelled:

JAMES EPPS and CO., Ltd.,

Homœopathic Chemists, London.

NEW DEPARTURE IN INSURANCE.

THE INDEPENDENT ORDER OF FORESTERS

Gives Life Assurance at Rates slightly above Actual Cost—that is, at less than half the usual charges of Life Assurance Companies. The Premiums are based upon "the Combined Experience Table," which was prepared by a Committee of eminent Actuaries from the experience of 17 British Life Offices. This Table of EXAMPLES gives the Cost for £400; the Average Premiums of Insurance Companies; the RATES of the I.O.F.; and the SAVING EFFECTED BY JOINING THE ORDER.

Age Last Birthday.	The Combined Experience Table per Year.	£400. Average cost of £400 in British Assurance Companies per Year.	I.O.F. Table of Premiums per Year.	Annual Saving to Members of the I.O.F.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
21	3 1 6	8 1 4	3 12 0	4 9 4
25	3 4 10	8 16 4	3 16 0	5 0 4
30	3 10 4	10 0 4	4 0 0	6 0 4
35	3 17 6	11 9 4	4 12 0	6 17 4
40	4 6 4	13 6 4	5 0 0	8 6 4
45	5 1 10	15 13 8	6 0 0	9 13 8
49	6 12 10	18 8 4	7 16 0	10 7 4

The full sum assured is payable at death. All premium paying of ordinary members in the I.O.F. ceases at 70 years of age, when one-tenth of the amount assured is paid to them annually, the unexhausted balance being payable at death. The entrance fees are very moderate, a £100 policy costing 17s.; £200, £1 16s. 6d.; £400, £2 8s.; £600, £2 9s. 6d.; £800, £2 16s.; and £1,000, £3 5s Court Dues (10s. to 12s. per annum) have to be paid by each member.

The Accumulated Funds amount to £160,000, of which £20,000 has been deposited with the British Government. Every claim has been paid within ten days, £328,000 having thus been paid during the last eleven years.

CHIEF OFFICE FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM:
24, CHARING CROSS, WHITEHALL, LONDON.

OFFICE FOR SCOTLAND:
217, BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW,
Where Prospectuses and Forms of Application for Membership may be obtained.

ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS.

John Noble, Ltd., the pioneers of the Revolution in Dress-making, are now supplying

A LADY'S HOLIDAY SUIT for 15/-

Made in the John Noble Cheviot Serge (Navy Blue or Black); also in Grey or Drab Homespun Mixtures, and in Navy or Drab Twill Drill. Each suit consists of fashionable Open Coat and improved Bell Skirt, both finished with special quality Silk Cord.

Packed in box and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

THE JOHN NOBLE HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES, consisting of wide Bell Skirt and fashionable Blouse Bodice, trimmed Russia Braid, are supplied in the John Noble Cheviot Serge or Brown Linen Holland for 10/6 complete. Carriage 9d. extra. **10/6**

KNOCKABOUT FROCKS for GIRLS.

Lengths	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45 inches.
Price	1/6	2/-	2/6	3/-	3/6	4/-	4/6	5/-	5/6 each.

Postage 4½d. extra. Lengths stated are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt.

Write for Patterns and Illustrated "Book of the Serge," sent Post Free by

JOHN NOBLE, LTD., The Warehouse, 11, Piccadilly, **MANCHESTER.**



"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 288.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLIII. A BROKEN IDOL.

THAT same evening Dora stood ready dressed for dinner, waiting outside her turret chamber. It was chilly and draughty, and the candle in the old silver candlestick guttered and wreathed itself into a winding sheet. Forster's room was some way from hers, and she always waited for him to come and fetch her down to dinner. It was his habit to think of others in these little ways, and perhaps this spontaneous kindness increased the personal influence he exercised over his fellow creatures.

Dora felt nervous after all she had gone through. The outward signs of perfect health and spirits had left her, and she looked round her as if she expected to see something uncanny.

"It does seem horrid and ungrateful of me," she thought, "but I'm glad we are going away, very glad. I want to get home, and to see Forster looking like his old self. Is it something to do with the Princess and Philip? Oh, I hope not, I hope not, but perhaps——" Dora paused; even in her thoughts she would not believe Forster could be wrong, only something evil in the very atmosphere of the Palace seemed to surround her. She did not know why, unless it were suggested by the vision of the King's disagreeable face as he looked at his gold.

She had put on a plain black velveteen dress because it was chilly, and with her young girlish head held a little high in a listening attitude she made a pathetic picture. The thought of her broken promise still weighed heavily on her, the more so because the Duke and Penelope seemed to make so light of it.

"Adela will understand," she thought, again dreaming of home. "We have been here too long. It feels as if we had got to an enchanted palace, such as one reads of in old stories. At home it is all so different. Forster, too, was so well and happy till a few days ago. What has happened? Something, I am sure. When will he come for me?"

She listened intently. A sound of rats in some room near at hand made her shiver a little—she, who had once had no fears! Then she again fancied that she heard a faint, very faint noise. No, it was only footsteps. At last she heard Forster's voice; he had not quite forgotten her, and was running up the winding stairs.

"Dora!"

He held a light in his hand and its flickers lighted up a ghastly face, with an expression on it which Dora had never seen before.

"Yes, here I am; I have been waiting ten minutes for you. I thought you would never come."

"Poor child, I was in late. I have been out again, but it is useless. I can't find Philip."

"Do you want him so much?" Dora asked, hardly knowing what she said, but feeling that something very terrible must be the matter for Forster to look like that—something which she could not at all understand, but which was as painful for her brother as the King's face had been for her.

"Yes, Dora, I want him very much. Come down now. He may come in, but if he does not I must wait up for him. I

must see him. If he is very late we cannot go off to-morrow morning, or, at least, I cannot go. Perhaps you could go home alone and explain about me, and say that I will follow as soon as possible. Tell mother that I am quite well, and that I shall stay at home till——"

"Till when, Forster? What is the matter? You look so strange."

"Do I? No, it is nothing, little Dora. I want you to go home, and we can all be together till I go back to Africa."

"Africa, the settlement? Oh, no! You are not strong enough. You have only just got over your fever."

They had now reached the bottom of the spiral stairs, where the passage leading to the other turret branched off. This passage was the one where the ghostly steps were heard, and Dora suddenly seized Forster's arm as if for protection.

"Oh, Forster, it does seem silly. I never was afraid before, but since I saw the King in the wood, and since my night walk, I feel so stupidly nervous. What will Adela say?"

Dora tried to laugh, but the laugh re-echoed from the hall in a mocking manner.

They entered the drawing-room, and here the customs of everyday life, which lay so heavy a hand on every one, forced back feelings which were uppermost, for the Duke, in his faultless evening dress and his courtly manners, seemed to remind his guests that society does not countenance any exhibition of feeling.

"Where is Penelope?" said the Duke; then he added, turning to the butler: "Go and tell Mrs. Winskell that dinner is ready."

The man disappeared, and the Duke offered his arm to Dora.

"We will not wait for the lady of the house," he remarked. "I dare say she will soon come. As to Philip, his absence is most unwarrantable."

The old dining-room felt dreary, although all the outward effect was cheerful enough. The fire blazed on the hearth, and the curtains were closely drawn.

Forster was glad enough that Penelope was late. It would have been his duty to give her his arm, and he could not yet bear the idea of feeling her hand upon him, the hand that had made him thrill with such intense but treacherous happiness. The one great dread now filling his mind banished all other sensations. A man who has severely burnt his arm forgets a cut on his finger.

Looking up at the Duke, who was making himself as agreeable as usual to Dora, Forster wondered why he should himself be suffering so much, when evidently his host was not at all anxious. But then the Duke did not know what Philip had heard. Was it all a mare's nest, or was the explanation of his disappearance natural?

"There is the Princess," said the Duke in a few moments; "in this quiet place punctuality is not enough cultivated. Ah, Penzie."

Dora looked up at the Princess, vaguely wondering what was taking place, but she noticed that Penelope was, if very pale and quiet, at least quite unlike Forster, who could not hide his anxiety.

"I am sorry, uncle; I have been speaking to my father."

The dignity of her manner had never shone forth so much. She was a Princess now, every inch of her. Her restraint and calmness were no mere result of character, but of the studied habit of years. This enabled her to show no trace of feeling before the servants, or indeed before any of those now present. Though the effort was terrible, she had determined to be calm and natural, and Forster alone could see how well she succeeded. But even Dora, ignorant as she was of the truth, could neither feel nor act quite naturally. The atmosphere seemed weighed down by a presentiment of evil.

"I wonder where Mr. Winskell can be?" she said, looking at the Duke.

"It is strange; he must have missed his path in the fog. I never remember such a fog before at this time of the year. I have ordered the carriage to-morrow for you, Bethune. You must leave this house punctually at six o'clock. I hope the fog will have cleared by that time."

"I shall be quite ready," exclaimed Dora. "Forster taught me punctuality when I was young, though as a family we are not famed for it. We all know that mother never can be ready for anything, and she does try so hard to make up for her lost time." Dora laughed as she said this.

"Catching time by the forelock is not easy," said the Duke.

"No one can really do it, can they, Princess?" said Dora. "It's like trying to undo one's mistakes. One can't really, one can only do something else. Father said that to me one day when I was a tiny child, and for a long time it made me quite frightened of doing anything, for fear it

should be one of those things which I could not undo."

"Have you seen Oldcorn, sir?" said Forster.

"He was to return this evening. The King had sent him off early to the furthest sheep run on the Steenley fells. I have left word of this mischance, and on his return he will find Philip, I'm sure."

At last the weary dinner was ended, and Penelope and Dora went together to the drawing-room. All the curtains were now drawn so that no face could look in; but Penelope, going to the end of the room, drew one aside, and looked out into the foggy silence. Dora dared not say anything, and sat over the fire, lost in thoughts of home. She had never before realised so much the meaning of homesickness. She was glad to be going, in spite of the unnumbered charms of the wild Rothery glen.

After a long silence Penelope came back to the hearth. She now seemed very restless, her usual calmness had forsaken her. She frowned a little as she stood there, tall and dignified, for pride was still the predominant expression of her face.

Dora, looking at her, seemed gradually to be losing her young innocence, and to be beginning to understand dimly that life was a very complex affair. Then, filled suddenly with that young passionate wish to give sympathy, and to mend all things broken, from chipped china to a human being's heart, she started up and put her arm round Penelope's neck.

"Oh, Princess, Princess, tell me what is the matter. I know that something is, that perhaps much is wrong; I don't understand it, but I see Forster is unhappy. Oh! so strangely unhappy. I have never seen him look like that before; and you, too, you are changed. Is it all this gold, this dreadful money? But why, why is it? I can't understand."

"It is better you should not understand it, child," said the Princess, "far better. You were brought up so differently; you had a loving home, and loving thoughts all about you, whilst I—I was always lonely and I did not even know it. And then when I found it out, and when I knew the meaning of the word, and the meaning of —another word, then suddenly, all became darkness, and the loneliness came back. Now there is nothing left in the world to comfort me, nothing, except perhaps—oh, Dora, kiss me! Your love brings a little warmth back. I have been so cold out there in the glen."

Dora thought she spoke of physical cold, and kissed her pale cheeks and warmed her fingers, wondering why a woman who had everything heart could desire should be so lonely. It was still a mystery to her.

"You are ill," she said at last.

"Ill! Oh no, I have never been ill; I don't think I know what it means. But I am very cowardly to-night; I did not think you would ever see that in me, Dora. Our motto makes that impossible." After a moment's silence she added: "My father wants me at the farm this evening."

"This evening—oh, Princess! that is impossible! Look how dark it is, and it is still so foggy. What would—Forster say?"

"Hush! Don't tell them. I must go. Haven't I done all this for my father and for my uncle? For the house of Winskell? As to its being dark, I could find my way blindfolded anywhere round the Rothery. I know every step—besides, I want to go out."

"But it is our last evening together."

Penelope smiled.

"Poor Dora. You are treated badly, but—no, you are my good spirit, dear, if there are good spirits about us. Sometimes I think there is nothing but evil around us."

Dora shivered a little.

"'Deliver us from evil'—I always think that means from evil and invisible beings. Princess, let me come with you."

"No, no, I must go alone. Remember how many years our house was desolate and ruinous, how money was always wanted, how we learnt to have no wishes, no feelings as to such small things as heat and cold. Though you know me as a great lady now, Dora, all the outside part of riches is really irksome to me. But to my uncle, on the contrary, it is necessary. He was born to be rich, he loves luxury. He looks years younger since we have had money. Yes, I did right, and I would do it again."

She spoke hurriedly, not speaking so much to Dora as to herself, and to some invisible accuser. Then she continued:

"Yes, I must go; but, Dora, when your brother comes in, don't repeat a word of all this to him. He is troubled about Philip, and I do not wish him to be anxious about me."

"Oh! but you don't really think anything has happened to him, do you?" asked Dora in a frightened tone.

"I don't know; nothing really bad, of course, but he may have taken a journey."

"Oh no, surely not so soon; but why, why?"

Penelope walked away again towards the window, and just then a low, dismal howl was heard outside. It was Nero, sending forth such an unearthly cry of concentrated misery that no wonder the mind of man has associated the sound with an idea of death.

Perhaps it was the shock produced by this, or else some deep subtle longing for sympathy, which suddenly made the Princess confide her secret to a girl so much younger and so far removed from herself in aim and in character.

"Why? You are old enough to know, Dora; you must know some day. Because Philip came home, and, and—he saw—he heard his—he heard the woman he had married declare that she had no love to give him."

"No, no, not that," said Dora, seizing Penelope's hand in hers. "That is impossible; it was not you, Princess, it was your lower nature, a being who is not really your own self. Oh no, no. Philip is so good. He ought to be called 'Great-heart.' Adela said that one day, and it is true. I am sure of it. He loves you as—I don't think I have ever seen a man love before. I know I am young, but in London I have seen people, and one hears about things and —and——"

Suddenly Dora paused, and she looked up at Penelope with a sudden look of intense horror in her face.

"Oh, Penelope, tell me—did he hear you say that to—to—Forster, to my Forster?"

"Yes," and then hearing some distant sound, and knowing she must go to her father, Penelope gathered up the folds of her long, soft evening gown, and walked out without saying another word, but not before she had seen the look in Dora's eyes, and then she knew that sin is far-reaching in its effects, and is like sulphur, which can tarnish silver even without coming into contact with it.

In the great, lonely, half-lighted room Dora Bethune crouched down on the hearth-rug, and as she pressed her young head against the hard oak seat of the arm-chair, she moaned out in her agony:

"Oh, Forster, Forster. No, no, it cannot be Forster."

CHAPTER XLIV. A DEATH HOWL.

On such a night it was strange that above the fog, now slowly dispersing, the stars should shine out brightly, as if trying to pierce the white covering which earth had drawn over herself.

By the farm in the wood, where the King now so often burrowed, like an aged animal returning to his lonely lair to die, the gloom was thick. Close by a young chained fox was tugging to free himself, for in the near distance he heard the melancholy call of his fellows, which he wildly answered, though knowing his impotence to obey these eerie appeals. It was past ten o'clock before the Princess, now dressed in dark, rough woollen clothes, ascended the steep path leading to the farm. As she reached the door Jim Oldcorn came striding up from another direction.

Knowing there were guests at the Palace he was a little surprised at seeing her, but he had been too long in the King's service to show this by word or look as he awkwardly but respectfully bared his head.

"Oh, Jim, come here; I want to see you particularly. Is the King in there? He told me he would be, but he does not always remember."

"It wad mabbe he's forgotten, Princess, but ah's gaun ta hev a try at t' door. Ah guessen varra much he kent lal better than to kip ye waitin'. He's oalas oppen till a bit o' mystry. Aw'm not proud o't job o' to-day, leuken ower t' fell farms for strayed sheep and leuken for thieves."

"Did the King send you, Jim? It has taken you all day, and the Duke's been wanting you sadly. Mr. Gillbanks has missed his way in the fog, at least he is not at home, and you must find him. You had better get back to the Palace quickly, and see the Duke."

"Well, ah'll be hough," said Jim Oldcorn. "It's a terrible neet for the fells."

"I don't know if he went on the fells or along the Rothery valley, or where he went, but you must find some one to go with you. He may have slipped, or —or——"

"Sure and sartin, nobuddy cud see anythink this kind o' neet, not even a jwoke. If ye ga up till the farm, Princess, aw'll run hoam; but have a care," he added in a low voice. "This morning the King, though he be a white-heedit man, com' oot leuken varra mad-like."

"I can take care of myself, Jim; go at once to the Palace," said Penelope. "You should have come home sooner. The business could not have taken you all this time. You must have met a friend."

"Aih deear! I only met Libby Squeears and she told me to wait for her at the

'Merry Foresters,' but I just bided a minute till aw was fairly tire't o' waitin' seah lang. That's the first toime ye say aw wur slow, sure and sartin; as to finding the young master, I rayder think he's tuk t' hint of the King, and made hissel scarce."

Penelope stamped her foot.

"Go at once, Oldcorn, and don't talk any more."

"Aw'll wait a sekkint, Princess, and see aboot the King," which he accordingly did, and having, by means known to himself, effected an entrance, he told the Princess that his master was waiting for her, and then he thought it best to stride down the hill towards the Palace.

Penelope had never been much afraid of her father's strange madness—indeed her own courage and fearless pride had always till now had a certain restraining effect upon his bursts of fury and bad language—but to-night, as the girl entered, it seemed to her that the being before her was hardly one whom it would be safe to contradict. A wild glitter in his eyes, added to a strange quietness of manner, frightened her more than all his former ravings. As she closed the latch she unconsciously thought that it would not be very difficult to escape if the King became too violent, but of common fear she felt none.

"Well, what do you want? Why have you made me come here at this time?" she said, too spent with previous emotion to care much what now might be said to her.

"Sit down, girl—why, curse you, after all I am your father, though you're nothing but a woman. You and Greybarrow want that gold, do you? What if I say no? Eh?"

"No, no, keep it, do what you like with it. I want none of the evil thing," she said almost fiercely, looking into the wood fire, which sent strange flickers over the old King and along the rafters of his rude dwelling.

"Eh! That's what you say now, is it? But I've told Greybarrow that he shall have it to build up the fortunes of the house. It's no matter to me now my son's dead. He was the last of the Winskells. Listen, Penelope, there's no one can take his place, no one shall. You can—devil take me, what's that cursed noise?"

"The foxes," said Penelope quietly, for the old man's eye glittered unnaturally.

"It's for all the world like a human cry; we have often said so, the boy and I."

"Is this all you want to say? I must go, there's trouble enough without adding to it."

"But I can make things straight. Come, girl, you're over proud—devilish proud. Listen, I know all about it. You love that man with the old name. Well, then, you shall have him; I say it, I, the King of Rothery."

"What are you talking about? I have always managed my own affairs, and shall still do so."

"No, it was Greybarrow who did it, and he's a fool. Do you hear, Penelope? He's mad. He thought oil and water would mix. He's a——"

"No one shall abuse my uncle to me," said Penelope. "Neither you nor anybody else."

"I tell you I can give you what you want. You can——"

"Are you coming home this evening, sir?" said Penelope, rising quickly. She began to fear her father, she knew not why. The very motion of his thin fingers and the curious expression of his face made her inwardly shudder. Outwardly she did not move a muscle, she scorned to show fear.

"No, I shall stay here. There's peace here and no strangers. There, get off with you. Where's Oldcorn? Why did he go?"

"I sent him on an errand."

"You sent him! A fine thing to order your father's servants. You're mighty proud, I dare say; but hark, Penelope, I only return you good for evil! There, there, go to your lover; he's no common tradesman at least. The family is not as old as ours, but they have blue blood in their veins."

"How dare you speak like that of—of——"

But the King only chuckled, and the Princess, flushing with anger, rose to go.

"You won't see Oldcorn to-night. Why don't you come home?"

But the King did not answer, and as Penelope opened the door, an owl floundered about the boughs of a near tree, and his weird hoot mingled with the distant howl of a roving fox. And all the way home the Princess seemed to be pursued by these sinister sounds, and by the scornful words of her father: "There, there, go to your lover."

Go to your lover! No, she could not do that, unless—unless—— Then she flung the idea away, remembering Forster's face. Life must be lived through without love and without hope. Philip would come back and Forster would explain to him, and then, and then——? A great blank wall rose before her mind's eye. Was there

a deadly curse on the house of Winskell? Why was everything a failure or worse than a failure, when outwardly life appeared to be a success?

When she reached home she went round by her father's door, always kept open by him. No robbers were to be feared in this valley, for none would have been bold enough to venture through the maze of the Rothery Glen. To her surprise the door was locked, and this showed her that the King had every intention of staying at the farm for this night at least. Every day he became more suspicious and strange.

"It is this horrid gold that has turned his head," she said, and then, going round to the front door, which the modern servants could not be persuaded to leave unbolted, she was forced to ring the bell.

The sleepy butler looked supremely and scornfully surprised at his mistress's appearance and dress. By his marked manner of rebolting the massive oak door, he meant to imply the rebuke which he could not utter. She did not go, as usual, to her uncle's study, but retired at once to her room and rang for Betty, who had never yet been persuaded to give up to the smart lady's maid the duties of putting her Princess to bed. Betty's tongue was by no means tied to-night.

"Mercy on us! Miss Penelope! It's very late you are to-night, and such a tale Jim Oldcorn's given us, and he says as how the master's never come in."

"What tale, Betty?"

"That the King sent him on a fool's errand about the sheep, saying that Dan Johnson had been re-marking with his own mark, and Dan he swore as it was the King that had been putting his brand on his sheep, and they went on arguing till both were black in the face, and Oldcorn must needs go all over the fells to make certain sure, and by that time it was late, and Libby—you know, Miss Penelope, her that was own cousin to my brother's wife—she begged him to wait for her, for it's mighty lonely is the wood path from Lindale valley to the Rothery, and Libby's so fearful of spirits, so he waited and waited."

"What did he do when he got here?" broke in the Princess, for this account of Jim's day was not at all interesting to her.

"I was coming to that, ma'am," said Betty, putting on great dignity. "Jim went to the Duke, he said you bade him to do so, and then he heard for the first time how the young master was missing, and how so be he was to find him. Mr. Bethune, he came too, and looked skeered, and said how he had seen him in the afternoon and not since, and that the fog had prevented him finding of him."

"And Jim's gone, then? How did you know all this?"

"He come and found me, Miss Penelope, in my own room, and he just recounted it."

"He had better have gone at once; but Mr. Gillbanks"—Penelope often called him thus to Betty—"is only gone on the estate; the fog overtook him, and he could not get back. He does not know the paths as we do."

"It's all strange, Miss Penelope, and all strangers, and no good comes of them. You'd better have remained single, and not meddled with the foreigners. It's your great-aunt as don't countenance it, sure and certain, Miss Penelope."

"You always were foolish, Betty," said the Princess angrily. Then suddenly her wrath died down, being extinguished in its own sorrow. "Has Miss Dora gone to bed?"

"That she has, long ago, wee pretty lamb. She's more like a babe in long clothes than a grown woman; but I heard her sobbing as if her heart would break. It's because she's leaving. She said to me last week, 'I would like to stay here years, Betty'; and I said, 'Oh, Miss Dora, it's but a poor place to live in, a poor place, and one that wears of the spirits, if so be you're a stranger to it all.'"

But Penelope was not listening. When Betty had finished brushing out her long hair, she paused.

"You've no fears for Mister Philip, ma'am, have you? There's Nero has been howling the death howl this evening, and it turns one to shivers o' listening, as Jim says."

"Fears! What nonsense! You are all superstitious and foolish, all of you," answered Penzie angrily; "but don't repeat your silly tales to me. I tell you I have no fears for Mr. Gillbanks, none at all. Good night. Go to bed, Betty."

"Nero's howl was the death howl nevertheless," muttered Betty, as she went off. "Poor thing, poor thing; a widow before she knows how a wife should love! It was not on her side, not on hers, and she none so anxious, I could see."

DAYS IN DELHI.

THE thrilling events connected with the capture of Delhi in the dark days of the Indian Mutiny almost obliterate the memory

of her previous history, and the dim outlines of the distant past seem blurred by the lurid mist of the modern tragedy. The capital of the Moguls has been regarded so exclusively from a single aspect that personal investigation alone brings adequate realisation of the fact that even the heroic siege of 1857 was but an incident in the long scroll of immemorial history unrolled before us.

Imperial Delhi was built by Shah Jehan, a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, and the wilderness of imposing ruins which surrounds it marks the site of the ancient city mentioned in Hindu chronicles as a place of importance even in B.C. 1400. The early ages of Delhi are veiled in that twilight of dreamland and myth which clouds the borderland of history, but the vague records imply a long period of undisturbed security and peace. This golden age of the city's life, though prolonged by the slow developement of the unchanging East, vanished like the early dew beneath the morning sun, as the world grew from childhood to maturity. The attacks of fierce Hindu tribes struck repeated blows at the immemorial dynasty consolidated through countless ages, and from the date of the first Mohammedan incursion, A.D. 715, perpetual conflict raged round Delhi, until at length she yielded to the irresistible power of the Moguls. Forty years after the earliest raids of the Moslem hordes, they were ignominiously expelled from the country, but in A.D. 1000 they returned with overwhelming forces, and in less than a century conquered the whole of Northern India. Three hundred years of internal war and anarchy followed the victorious onslaught of the invading hosts, and the government was alternately divided and centralised according to the measure of success which attended the prince of the reigning dynasty. In A.D. 1398 Timour the Tartar, better known as Tamerlane, penetrated to Delhi, where he proclaimed himself Emperor of India. A fifteen days' occupation of the city sufficed for the task of pillage and destruction, after which the new monarch abruptly withdrew himself to devastate all the provinces under his yoke.

At the end of two centuries fraught with internecine strife and tumult, Baber Khan, the Mogul Sultan of Cabul, invaded India and became master of Delhi in A.D. 1526. His son was driven out by the exasperated people, but returned after sixteen years to restore the Mogul dynasty. The three Emperors of this mighty line, who impressed the indelible seal of their own individuality on Northern India, were the wise and tolerant Akbar; the despotic but highly-cultured Shah Jehan, who signalised his reign by the erection of buildings which rank among the wonders of the architectural world; and the fiery conqueror Aurungzebe, who brought the entire peninsula of India under his own control. The Mahratta invaders reached the climax of power in the eighteenth century, when Nadir Shah, the greatest of modern Persian rulers, crossed the Indus, defeated the Imperial troops, and captured Delhi, which he plundered of gold and jewels to the value of twenty millions sterling. Again the Mogul dynasty was re-established, and again the Mahrattas ravaged the northern provinces with fire and sword. In 1761 they came into collision with the savage Afghans, and a battle in which four hundred thousand men were engaged resulted in the total defeat and practical extermination of the Mahratta forces.

In the succeeding century the destinies of the peninsula were swayed by the East India Company, which became the most powerful commercial organisation in the world, and maintained an immense native army commanded by European officers. The increasing prestige of the wealthy trading community soon demanded a wider field of action than that provided by the early settlements of Surat, Bombay, and Calcutta, and a network of operations rapidly extended over the whole surface of India, from whence a vast annual revenue was derived by the monopoly of commerce.

A war waged against the Emperor of Delhi and the King of Oude resulted in the acquisition of the northern provinces, but in 1857 the smouldering embers of discontent were fanned into a devouring flame, and the Sepoys rose in open rebellion. The monarchs of Delhi and Oude headed the revolt, which lasted for eighteen months, and at the close of the widespread Mutiny the government of the peninsula was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown. At the capture of Delhi the Emperor was deposed and banished from the country, but a still more terrible punishment was inflicted upon him by the stern and cruel necessities of war. The two princes of the royal house, as they lay bound in the cart which was conveying them to the prison, were discovered in the act of inciting their guards to treachery by the promise of ultimate reward. The captives thus sealed their own doom, and

were immediately shot by Major Hodson, the English officer in command of the detachment — a prompt and self-reliant action which struck terror into the cowardly hearts of the native troops, and effectually quelled the final outbreak of rebellion.

The richly-wooded plain to the south-west of Delhi sweeps up to a rugged line of rocky hills covered with brushwood, and terminating in the famous "Ridge" outside the city. The capture of this natural fortification by the English troops was a feat of heroism unsurpassed in the annals of modern warfare. The battlemented walls remain as they were left at the end of the siege, but the yawning breaches in the crumbling masonry, and the huge heaps of overthrown stones, which recall the stormy past, wear the green tracery of clinging ivy and feathery fern wherewith the hand of Nature strives to veil the ravages of war. The massive arches of the Cashmere Gate, so gallantly stormed by the British troops, still rise above ruined bastions and broken earthworks. Only a battered panel riddled with shot remains of the great teakwood doors, hard as iron, which opposed their formidable barriers to the besieging forces. The Cashmere Gate was practically the key of the city, and the command of this coveted position ensured the ultimate control of the beleaguered capital.

The former concentration of local interests which individualised every Indian city has left an ineffaceable stamp on Delhi, where the aspect and character of the people differ entirely from the prevailing types in Bengal, Bombay, or Madras.

A mighty citadel of red sandstone contains the royal palace within the lines of machicolated walls and frowning bastions, which resemble a stupendous range of porphyry cliffs rather than a fortress built by human hands. The British flag waves proudly above the colossal Elephant Gate, a massive pile flanked by two gigantic towers. We can imagine the pang of passionate regret with which the last scion of Delhi's royal line, the son born in exile, regarded the standard of victorious England as he gazed for the first time upon the palace of his race, and saw the British colours floating above the threshold which his own foot might never cross.

The unfortunate prince, impelled by an irresistible yearning to visit the lost capital of his father, was constrained to seek the shelter of the little dâk bungalow erected by the English Government for the accommodation of strangers, and the offspring of the royal house, now "lost to use and power and name and fame," drank the cup of humiliation to the dregs, as he realised in the stern decree of a doom more bitter than death that "his place knew him no more."

A vaulted gateway beneath a dome large enough for a cathedral gives access to a grassy enclosure, where soldiers are drilling in front of the beautiful Dewan-i-Am, or Judgement Hall. The exquisite mosaics of animals, birds, fruits, and flowers which brighten the pale purity of the milky marbles were inlaid by the famous Austin de Bordeaux, for the hand of the Mogul "stretched through every land," and the artists of Italy and France were pressed into the service of Indian royalty during the period of boundless power and incalculable wealth, when the great monuments of Mohammedanism rose in dream-like beauty above the burning plains of the northern provinces. In the Dewan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, stood the Peacock Throne, valued at six millions sterling. This barbaric structure of gold and jewels resembled a huge four-post bedstead. Two life-sized peacocks of emerald, sapphire, and topaz spread their glittering trains on either side of the golden canopy, and a parrot of diamonds and rubies blazed in the centre.

The throne was demolished, and the material seized as plunder, by Nadir, Shah of Persia, in 1739. Other conquerors followed his example, and finally despoiled the palace of the principal treasures. The Hummum, or Royal Bath, was originally inlaid with gems, but the precious stones were torn from the setting, and the elaborate tracery wantonly defaced. The damage has been repaired with inferior enamelling, coloured lac being substituted for the missing jewels, but the garish effect of the gaudy tints and brilliant gilding contrasts unfavourably with the subdued richness of tone in the halls and corridors, where the glow of intricate mosaic is mellowed and softened by age. Irreparable havoc was wrought upon the palace during the siege, and only a small portion of the original building remains to indicate the former splendour of the stately pile. Above a knot of gloomy cypresses, the delicate domes of the graceful Pearl Mosque, erected for the devotions of the Imperial Zenana, soar like clustering foam-bells into the sparkling blue of the Indian sky, the pearly whiteness of every glistening cupola relieved by a gilded pinnacle. Through the extensive Kudsia gardens, where luxuriant foliage

and spacious lawns are brown with the stifling dust, in which sun-baked Delhi lies ankle-deep, we walk to Nicholson's grave in a dreary cemetery. A crumbling cross of greystone rises from a bed of flowers, withered and parched even in the laurel-shaded nook where the modern hero of Delhi sleeps amidst the peace he died to win.

Returning in the coolness of the sunset hour, past various points of interest connected with the siege, heaps of ruins, rusty guns and piled-up cannon-balls, mark the localities where the storm of battle raged with unremitting fury. The full moon floods the sky, and changes the tints of the wooded landscape into the sharp chiaroscuro of an etching before the fascinating ramble comes to an end; the wild shriek of the jackals in the distant jungle reverberates across the plain, and forms a weird accompaniment to the fantastic whirling of a Nautch-girl in the verandah, where gleaming eyes and waving arms loom through mysterious shadows and suggest the mystic incantations of some Indian sibyl in the days of yore.

The curious Chandni Chowk, or "Silver Street," of Delhi, one of the most picturesque thoroughfares in the East, derives its name from the filigree wrought with unrivalled skill and taste in the Mogul capital. Sunlight and shadow contend for mastery among irregular masses of tumbledown houses, where carved wooden balconies approached by external stairs glow with rich embroideries, which form but a tithe of the varied treasures found in the Chandni Chowk. The muslin-robed merchants stand outside the shops to proclaim the value of the wares and to solicit inspection. Dark and winding steps lead to dusky chambers where an all-pervading odour of sandalwood and musk creates the traditional Oriental atmosphere, and impregnates the bales of silk and cashmere piled round teakwood chests filled with silver, gold, and jewels. Bargaining proceeds with Eastern deliberation, which yields to the rapid methods of the West when the adaptable Hindu mind detects a trace of dawning impatience on English faces. Temptation is rife, and through tons of rubbish innumerable gems of art reward the explorer who can afford the necessary outlay of time and money.

The crowded streets of Indian cities present manifold attractions, but the study of native life and manners in Delhi is frequently interrupted by the grey herds of Brahmini cows, which roam about at their will, with the evident conviction invariably entertained by these pampered animals that their own importance far exceeds that of the community which they inconvenience by their presence. An overturned stall witnesses to the self-assertion of the sacred kine, and as our carriage disperses a blockade of sleek backs and interlacing horns, an indignant member of the scattered conclave wreaks vengeance on the battered chariot by pushing it along with these natural weapons to the end of the street. The "raison d'être" of the assembled cows is found in the presence of a great Hindu temple, where a glimpse of glittering images in fretted shrines is unwillingly granted to the unbelievers, whose feet are forbidden to tread the sacred courts of the Brahmin sanctuary. Comparative toleration awaits us in the precincts of the magnificent Jumna Musjid, which ranks first among Indian mosques of Islam. This superb edifice of blood-red sandstone and snowy marble stands upon the levelled summit of a high knoll beyond the fort, with ruddy minarets piercing the hot blue sky above the misty whiteness of the cloud-like domes.

The red arcades and marble columns of the peristyle in the noble court complete the perfect harmony of form and colour, and in the severe simplicity and perfect proportion of the superb sanctuary we read the secret of that impressive power which characterises Mogul architecture. Turbaned sheiks lie prostrate on Persian carpets beneath the silvery heights of the central dome, and white-robed groups gather round the marble fountain outside the mosque, laving hands and faces in sunlit showers of rainbow-tinted spray. The erection of the Jumna Musjid occupied five thousand workmen daily for a period of six years, and in A.D. 1658 the vast building which so accurately represents the rigid austerity of the stern Mohammedan creed was brought to a triumphant completion. The blue waters of the sacred Jumna wind round stately mosque and frowning fort. On an island in the river opposite the palace, and connected with it by a stone bridge of five arches, stands the earlier citadel of Selimgurh, built before the present city existed, but after the erection of Shah Jehan's palatial abode within the mediæval fortress, the ancient residence of royalty was converted into a state prison, and now serves as a military storehouse. Outside the Delhi Gate of the city lies the

crumbling village of Ferozabâd, containing numerous relics of Buddhist shrines round an ancient stone pillar known as Feroz Shah's Lât, and inscribed with some edicts of Asokâ in the Pâli character. The weight of the monolith is estimated at twenty-seven tons, and it probably commemorates the conversion of the reigning monarch and his people to the tenets of Buddhism in those early days when the new faith spread with unexampled rapidity over every province of north-western India. Architectural remains of a later epoch add to the attractions of this old-world site. The noble tomb of the Emperor Humayan and the ruined mosque of Shir Shah mark the change of creed which followed the Moslem invasion, while the observatory of Jai Singh and the deserted Hall of Seventy Columns, known as the Chowsât, recall the temporary triumph of Brahminism before the fanatical followers of the Prophet obtained possession of the coveted city.

A drive of eleven miles across the dusty plain brings us to the Kootub Minar, the noblest architectural memorial of the past, and the highest pillar in the world. This majestic column, forty-seven feet in diameter, tapers off in diminishing storeys marked by beautiful external galleries, to a height of two hundred and thirty-eight feet. The summit is reached by an easy ascent of three hundred and seventy-nine stone steps, and at every angle a niche with open horseshoe arches lights up the interior of the colossal minaret. The rich red sandstone of the lower portion terminates at the third encircling corridor, and the remainder of the ribbed and fluted tower, composed of white Ulwar marble, darts like a shaft of light into the infinite blue of the radiant heaven. The wreathing inscriptions form "the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah," in delicate Persian characters framed by deeply-cut Arab sculpture of bosses, bells, and lamps.

The Kootub Minar was erected by an Emperor of Delhi for the use of his only daughter, in order that her eyes might rest upon the sacred Ganges when she performed her daily orisons at the summit of the lofty tower. A magnificent view repays the ascent to the highest gallery, but the vision of Gunga's healing flood, though perchance vouchsafed to the eye of faith in the clearer spiritual atmosphere of an earlier day, is withheld from the unbelieving Giaour, and though the blue Jumna bounds the wide expanse of sunburnt plain dotted with crumbling ruins and hoary tombs, we look in vain for the mightier river which receives this noble tributary three hundred miles away.

The architectural monuments of India frequently gathered a group of satellites around them, like the feudal towns called into existence by the needs of mediæval castles. A solid shaft of mixed metal stands near the Kootub, which dwarfs it to diminutive size. This column, known as "The Iron Pillar," was placed in its present position by the Hindus about A.D. 315, and was erected by Rajah Dhawa, who inscribed his name upon the imperishable memorial. Another relic of Hindu monarchy remains in the "Boot Khana," or Idol Temple, and the ruins of later date consisting of the great mosque of the Kootub, the palace and gateway of Allâ-ud-deen, and the tombs of Kings and Prime Ministers, indicate that the vicinity of the stately minaret was reverenced as holy ground.

The architectural treasures which enrich the Indian peninsula are now secured from destruction or violation by the protection of the Government, and Schools of Archæology employ large numbers of native draughtsmen, whose accurate copies of every detail in the varied and intricate designs of palace, temple, and tomb display the inexhaustible patience and subtlety of Hindu genius, which, while reflecting the influences of every dominant race, possessed sufficient inherent vitality to shape them into native mould. The ruins of forgotten dynasties which rise on every side of the Kootub Minar transport our thoughts to the heroic age of India, when sages and warriors divided the honours of the mystic land which cradled so many of the ancient creeds and civilisations afterwards disseminated over the entire continent of Asia.

The women of the Aryan race frequently fulfilled the promise of the tribal name derived from the word "Arya," or "Noble." Vedic hymns of legendary times and historical records of subsequent ages depict a higher type of womanhood than that of the later epochs, when the comparative freedom of antiquity was crushed beneath the heavy yoke of caste and creed. Even then bright exceptions were occasionally found, and two noble names enrolled in the archives of Delhi merit the honour bestowed upon them. One of these famous Queens was the Sultana Rezia, the daughter of Altmash, the second of the Slave Kings, who received their investiture from the Caliphate of Bagdad. After the death of

her father, and the deposition of her brother on the score of incompetence, Rezia was called to the throne by the unanimous voice of the people. In the difficult circumstances of her reign she acted with consummate prudence and judgement, and though the Vizier of the previous ruler brought a hostile army to the very gates of Delhi, the wit and wisdom of the young Sultana dispersed it like a wreath of mist, or the phantom legions of a dream. The success of her administration was evidenced by the increased prosperity of the kingdom. Rezia lived for the good of her subjects, and held the reins of government in a firm but gentle hand; but a suspicion of favouritism caused her downfall, and she was captured by a Turcoman chief who headed a rebellion against her. The admiration inspired by the Queen's noble conduct induced the lawless warrior to save her life by marrying her, and in his attempt to restore her to the throne, two unsuccessful but desperate battles were fought before the walls of Delhi, the brave Sultana riding unveiled at the head of her troops, until both she and her husband were captured and slain by the treachery and ingratitude of the fickle populace upon whom Rezia had showered immeasurable benefits.

The other heroine of Delhi was the beautiful Nûr Jehan, the wife of Akbar's dissolute son, the Emperor Jehangir, whose attachment to his model spouse was the only redeeming feature in a cruel and degraded character. Across this dusty plain the future Empress was brought as a helpless infant into Delhi by a Tartar merchant, who found the weeping babe deserted and exposed to death in the cruel Hindu fashion of the day. Carefully educated by her reputed father, who rose to distinction at the Imperial Court, the lovely maiden was given in marriage to a noble chieftain, afterwards assassinated by order of Jehangir, who took forcible possession of the young widow and raised her to the throne of India. For sixteen years Nûr Jehan was the good angel of Jehangir's dissipated life. She shared his throne, checked his extravagance, and sought to restrain the drunkenness and vice which stained his unworthy career.

The luxurious Court was reformed and purified, and a contemporary chronicle indicates the reverence of the monarch for his gentle consort by stating that "According to the decree of the Emperor, gold coinage acquired a hundred times its own value if the name of the Empress Nûr Jehan was added to his own." When Jehangir was taken prisoner by one of his own generals, Nûr Jehan flew to his assistance, travelling on an elephant, and taking her infant grand-daughter with her.

On crossing the river Jhelum the child was wounded by an arrow, which also struck the elephant so severely that the gorgeous howdah of the Empress was thrown into the water, though she maintained her seat with the babe clasped in her arms. After floating down the stream for a long distance, the royal travellers were rescued from their perilous position, but Nûr Jehan, with wonderful presence of mind, had already extracted the arrow from the child's arm, and with a strip torn from her own silken veil was binding up the wound. This faithful wife shared her husband's captivity, and effected his final liberation, endeavouring by unremitting perseverance to check the downward course of his corrupt and vicious existence. At his death in A.D. 1627, Nûr Jehan doffed her regal robes and costly jewels, assuming the white garb of a widow and living in strict seclusion during the twenty years which elapsed before the end of her own pure and exemplary life.

The crumbling ruins which loom through the darkening twilight teem with memories of those chequered and stormy times when Hindu, Moslem, Mahratta, and Afghan in turn ruled the changing fate of Imperial Delhi. As we look back from the peaceful present to the shadowy past, across the long chain of intervening centuries filled with the smoke of battle and the clash of arms, the strange revolution of Fortune's wheel which placed an Eastern sceptre in Western hands appears the most mysterious episode in a chequered history, when through the red glare of a menacing dawn Delhi at length emerged into the unclouded light of a new and prosperous day.

THE BLACK DEATH.

It is only within quite recent years that the relative importance of the tremendous pestilence which devastated Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century has been adequately realised by historians. Occurring, as it did, between the battles of Crecy and Poitiers, at a period usually regarded as the most brilliant in the long reign of Edward the Third, it has been treated with comparative silence by English writers. Hume dismisses it in a few sentences, and

even John Richard Green only devotes to it a couple of pages. Professor Seebohm was the first to call attention to the importance of the subject; and since then much light has been thrown upon the calamity by Dr. Jessopp, the late Professor Thorold Rogers, Dr. Cunningham, and other writers. It has been reserved, however, for Dr. Gasquet to arrange and summarise the results of their labours, and to present, in a connected form, the terrible story of the most frightful calamity that has ever overtaken the world.

The great pestilence, commonly known as the Black Death, which reached Europe in the autumn of 1347, seems to have been raging in the East for some three or four years previously. In China (where it occasionally reappears even to the present day) more than thirteen millions are said to have died of it, while India was almost depopulated. In 1346 it appeared among the Tartar host besieging the city of Caffa in the Crimea, who communicated, with terrible effect, the disease to the defenders, by throwing the bodies of the dead over the walls into the city. From Caffa the infection was carried, probably by trading ships, to Constantinople; and, having devastated Turkey and Greece, the pestilence burst upon Sicily in October, 1347, with such terrible severity that in the language of a contemporary writer, "the father abandoned the sick son; magistrates and notaries refused to come to make the wills of the dying; even the priests to hear their confessions."

The special symptoms of the disease seem to have been everywhere the same. Carbuncles, sometimes as large as hens' eggs, sometimes smaller, appeared in the axillæ or the groin, accompanied usually, but not always, with gangrenous inflammation of the throat and lungs, and with spitting of blood. This latter was the fatal symptom. "From the carbuncles and glandular swellings," says a contemporary writer, "many recovered; from the blood-spitting none." The infection was so swift and deadly that the slightest contact, even with the clothes of the sick person, served to communicate it. Boccaccio tells a story to the effect that the rags of a poor man just dead having been thrown into the street, two hogs came by at the moment and began to root among them, shaking them in their jaws. In less than an hour they both fell down, and died on the spot. Another Italian writer, himself a sufferer from the pestilence, relates his personal experience. "And here," he says, "I can give my testimony. A certain man bled me, and the blood flowing touched his face. On that same day he was taken ill, and the next he died; and by the mercy of God I have escaped."

Early in 1348 the great pestilence reached Italy. Some plague-stricken vessels from the East brought the infection to Genoa and Venice, and from these two places the disease quickly spread over the entire country. At Venice seventy out of every hundred of the population died, while at Genoa hardly one-seventh of the inhabitants were spared. The fearful nature of the infection may be gathered from the story of four soldiers, who appropriated a woollen bed-covering which they had found in a house near Genoa where the sickness had carried off the inmates. The night following the four men slept under the coverlet, and in the morning all were found to be dead. A Genoese infected with the disease brought the plague to Piacenza. He sought out his friend Fulchino della Croce, who took him into his house. Almost immediately the poor man died, and "the said Fulchino was also quickly carried off, with his entire family and many of his neighbours." At Florence the ravages of the pestilence were so awful that the outbreak became popularly known in Europe as the "Pestilence of Florence." Between the months of March and July it was estimated that upwards of a hundred thousand souls perished in the city alone. Among the victims was the renowned historian Giovanni Villani. At Pisa many names were completely wiped off the roll of the living; while at Siena neither position nor wealth availed to procure bearers to carry the bodies of the dead to the plague-pits. "I, Agniolo di Tura," writes a contemporary chronicler, "carried with my own hands my five little sons to the pit; and what I did many others did likewise." The poet Petrarch gives the following account of the heroic death of his friend Paganinus of Milan: "He was suddenly seized in the evening by the pestilential sickness. After supping with friends he spent some time in conversation with me, in the enjoyment of our common friendship, and in talking over our affairs. He passed the night bravely in the last agony, and in the morning was carried off by a swift death. And that no horror should be wanting, in three days his sons and all his family had followed him to the tomb."

The plague seems to have been conveyed to France, as to Italy, by a Genoese vessel from Caffa, which put into the port of

Marseilles. And here, as in Italy, the mortality was fearful. After the pestilence had passed, says a contemporary, Marseilles seemed like an uninhabited place. Several accounts remain of the ravages of the disease at Avignon, from which we learn that the panic caused by the mortality was so great that numbers, the moment they were seized with the sickness, were hurried off to the plague-pits, and thus buried alive. Even the cats, and dogs, and poultry died by thousands; and the very fish in the sea were supposed to be infected. The Pope isolated himself in his palace-fortress, and caused huge fires to be kept burning night and day to keep off the infection. He also ordered processions on certain days, in which persons of both sexes, sometimes to the number of two thousand, many of them in sackcloth, and others tearing their hair, and scourging themselves with knotted cords till the blood streamed down their naked backs, chanted penitential litanies. As a further means of propitiating the wrath of heaven, and of staying the pestilence, a number of wretched men, accused of having poisoned the wells, were burnt alive, and, says the chronicler, "many daily are burnt."

In Spain, the Queen of Aragon was one of the earliest victims; and Alphonso the Eleventh soon followed. A pilgrim, returning home through Galicia, reached a town named Salvaterra, where, says Li Muisio, "after supping with the host—who, with two daughters and one servant, were not conscious of any sickness upon them—he settled with him for his entertainment, and went to bed. Next morning, rising early and wanting something, the traveller could make no one hear. Then he learnt from an old woman he found in bed, that the host, his two daughters, and servant had died in the night." At Spalatro, in Dalmatia, to add to the horrors of the situation, packs of wolves descended from the mountains, and openly attacked the survivors. Some of the Swiss valleys were almost depopulated by the pestilence. In Holland people died walking in the streets. Sweden, Norway, and Denmark received the infection from England. A London vessel, with all its crew dead on board, drifted ashore at Bergen in Norway. From Bergen the epidemic quickly spread over the entire country. Whole districts were depopulated, and "forests grew where there had once been churches and villages." In the capital of Sweden "the streets were strewn with corpses," and among the victims were the two brothers of the King.

Rumours of the coming scourge reached England in the early part of 1348, and in the month of August the first case occurred at Melcombe Regis, in Dorsetshire. The infection was probably conveyed by trading vessels plying between that port and Calais. Having established itself at Melcombe Regis, the pestilence rapidly spread over Dorset, Devon, and Somerset, sweeping down the inhabitants by thousands.

In Bristol the living were scarcely able to bury the dead, and the grass grew several inches high in High Street and Broad Street. The plague reached London about the end of October, and for six months the mortality was fearful. Bearers could not be found to carry the dead; and here, as on the Continent, men and women "bore their own offspring on their shoulders and cast them into the common pit." "In the same year," says an old chronicler, "there was a great mortality of sheep everywhere in the kingdom; so much so, that in one place there died in one pasture more than five thousand sheep, and they were so putrid that neither beast nor bird would touch them."

Owing to the absence of statistics it is impossible to arrive at any accurate estimate as to the number of victims. But the Episcopal registers enable us to discover the exact number of deaths among the "beneficed" clergy. And an examination of these documents reveals an appalling mortality among the occupants of livings. In the diocese of Salisbury, which then comprised the counties of Dorset, Wilts, and Berkshire, after making due allowance for the ordinary average number of deaths, at least three hundred beneficed clergy must have fallen victims to the pestilence during the fatal year. In the diocese of Exeter, comprising the two counties of Devon and Cornwall, the number of deaths nearly reached three hundred and fifty. In the smaller diocese of Bath and Wells, no fewer than two hundred livings were rendered vacant from the same cause. In the diocese of Norwich, Dr. Jessopp calculates that some two thousand clergy of all sorts were carried off by the disease in a few months. And if we may take the proportion of beneficed to unbeneficed clergy as about one to four, which seems a not improbable estimate, it would appear that not less than twenty-five thousand clergy died in England of the Black Death.

With regard to the mortality among the people generally, the best authorities are substantially agreed that, in round numbers,

one-half of the people of England were swept away. The poor people were the chief sufferers. "It is well known," wrote the late Professor Thorold Rogers, "that the Black Death, in England at least, spared the rich and took the poor. And no wonder. Living as the peasantry did in close, unclean huts, with no rooms above ground, without windows, artificial light, soap, linen; ignorant of certain vegetables, constrained to live half the year on salt meat; scurvy, leprosy, and other diseases, which are engendered by hard living and the neglect of every sanitary precaution, were endemic among the population." The scarcity of labourers was so great that more than a third part of the land remained uncultivated; and "women, and even small children, might be seen with the plough and leading the wagons."

It would be interesting and instructive to trace the effect of the Black Death upon the social and religious condition of the people, and to notice the marvellous recovery which almost immediately followed the disappearance of the pestilence. But such an undertaking would be far beyond the scope of the present paper. We have simply desired to lay before our readers such an outline of the story as may enable them to realise the overwhelming nature of the catastrophe.

KATTIE'S WEDDING.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was the last Thursday in Epiphany, and fair-day in Gurteen. The one and only street the village boasted of was thronged with folk laughing and chattering as none but an Irish crowd can laugh and chatter; indeed, so great were their numbers that to get along at all you had to turn aside and scramble through the shingle, where the boats lay within shouting distance of their owners' doors. But there was little buying and selling that day in the tiny hamlet on the ocean's edge. The little pink "boneen" and the matronly, hoary-headed sow slept more or less peacefully in the long line of carts, with their high red crates, that lined the narrow footpath, as nobody seemed to want them. In fact, they were there more to give the assembly the "tone" of a fair—for all men knew that "match-making" was the real business of to-day, the last fair-day before Lent, and so the last great chance to make a match.

Threading their way up and down the village passed the "boys" in Sunday best, ostentatiously ignoring the girls, who, in their turn, tried to look as if they did not know that they were verily in the marriage market, and as if they liked wearing boots. On the Green beneath the chapel there was dancing to the lilt of Larry O'Toole's fiddle; square dances, in which partners sailed up and down past each other with heads held high as if a lifelong coolness had just sprung up between them, while their busy feet never ceased to mark the rhythm on the "floor"—jigs, reels, singles and doubles—when some bolder spirit would "throw the shoes off av him" and take his place on the door that lay on the grass for such as ventured a "pas de seul." Then Blind Larry would screw his old eyes tight shut and make his bow dance on the strings to the tune of "The Trip to the Cottage" or "The Humours of Whisky," while the rest of the assembly gathered round, beating time with head and foot, with such remarks as: "'Tis he have the elemint fur dancin'"; "Haven't he a great warrant throw the legs, now?" "Wisha, more power to ye're elbow, Larry!"

But while youth disported itself on the Green, age and experience abode in the village, matching their sons and daughters in holy wedlock. In such cases it is not necessary that Corydon and Phyllis should be acquainted, but Corydon Senior must be satisfied that Phyllis does not come empty-handed. Nevertheless, the young people sometimes managed to introduce some romance into the transaction; and of one such case I shall tell.

While Blind Larry "ris jigs" for the fair, a party of four people were taking solemn counsel in a little shanty by the beach. This was Andy Lyneham's forge, and Andy himself was in the midst of the conclave—not that he took part in it; he had nothing to say as a rule—and now he listened sullenly while his old mother was making a match for him with the daughter of Terence Flannigan, who, with his wife, completed the number of conspirators.

"Andeed, Mrs. Lyneham, ma'am," Mrs. Flannigan was saying as she threw back the great hood of her long cloak, "andeed, ma'am, 'tisn't like as if me dater Kattie hadn't ne'er a boy at all afther her; there's whips av thim wantin' her."

"There is that!" corroborated her husband emphatically.

"But ye see, ma'am," she went on, "me an' me husban' wants some one that have a thrade; times is so bad wid the land."

"Thrue fur ye, Mrs. Flannigan, ma'am,"

said the other woman with garrulous politeness. "Thim as has land is robbed intirely these times. 'Tis well fur ye, Terence Flannigan, that ye've been puttin' by a bit av money thim thirty years," she added cunningly.

"Little enough, ma'am, little enough," said Terence; "but I'll give Kattie's man a hundhred poun' the day afther the marryin'—divil a pinny more."

"Faix, thin, 'tis no great match afther all," said Mrs. Lyneham, gathering her heavy cloak closer about her as if to go.

"Look at that, now!" cried the other woman, flaring up; "maybe ye wouldn't get an offer like it so handy agin. Where would the likes av ye git a hundred poun', or half av it?"

"An' where would ye git a fine, hearty lump av a boy like my Andy? The best smith that ever dhruve a nail in a shoe!" cried Mrs. Lyneham, fairly dancing with rage.

"Howld ye're whisht, mother. Ye've a dale too much chat out av ye," said the bone of contention, rising from the anvil where he had been sitting, chewing a long straw in silence. "I'll take the gurl, Terence," he went on; "the owld woman wants help in the house; an' 'tis time I tuk some one, I suppose."

"'Tis, sure," said Terence. "Give me a howld av ye're hand, Andy. There, now," shaking the blacksmith's fist heartily, "I won't break me word to ye about the money."

"I believe ye," said the blacksmith, lounging out of the door.

"Well, there, now, the match is made," said Mrs. Lyneham, smoothing back her grey hair under her snow-white mutch, "an' divil a steadier boy there is in Gurteen than Andy. 'Tis the lucky girl ye're darter is this day, Mrs. Flannigan."

"Faix, ma'am," answered Mrs. Flannigan, bridling, "I knows thim as would give golden guineas to be matched with Kattie; though, andeed, ma'am," she added, softening, "I have no word to say agin Andy."

"'Deed, he minds his business well, an' niver touches a sup of dhrink," said the fond mother proudly. "Ony if he wouldn't spind so much time foosthering about with thim little hins, bad luck to thim, that lays an igg no bigger than a marble," she added plaintively, as the trio started down the village street.

The "little hins" alluded to were the one extravagance, the sole form of dissipation, that the burly smith allowed himself, and were a thriving family of bantams that he loved as his life. With his own hands he had made a wire enclosure for them behind the forge, and none but himself might feed them. His thrifty mother had a huge contempt for his "little owld chickens," as she called them, for by their fruits she valued them, and Julia Bralligan at the corner shop gave only fourpence a dozen for the dainty eggs.

But while the plotters plotted in the grimy forge, the victim of their machinations was out on the Green demurely footing it opposite Patsey O'Rourke, her partner in the "pattern."

She was a tall, slim maid, with the jet-black hair and exquisite grey eyes seen so often in the south; he was an immense young fellow, red-haired, and freckled like a wren's egg, with eyes that looked as innocent and as simple as a child's. He was perfectly happy now, going through the intricate figures of the dance clumsily enough while he feasted his silly blue eyes on his pretty vis-à-vis, who seemed strangely absorbed in her own thoughts just at present. When at length the trippings to and fro, the "linking partners" and mad whirls in the middle of the floor, and the stately curtseys came to an end, Kattie whispered to her big partner as he handed her cloak to her:

"Come here, beyant, a minute."

Patsey's eyes danced with joy at the prospect, and seeing an air of mystery in the girl's manner, he assumed such a knowing expression on his guileless countenance that made him look more like a very wicked baby than anything else. Soon the pair had wandered away up the hill behind the old grey chapel, and stood by the wishing-well, where a thousand little rags of all colours and texture fluttered from the boughs of the hawthorn bush—each the record of some wish accomplished by the good Saint Bridget for one who drank of her holy well in perfect faith. Then they halted, the girl sitting on the low wall that went half-way round the edge of the water, while her companion stood awkwardly by, with a dumb adoration written in every line of his simple, manly face.

"Tuesday is Shrove," said Kattie suddenly, intently watching the fall of a pebble into the clear water.

"Eh?" said Patsey, mystified; and he bent over to watch the rings that formed where the stone had fallen, looking from

them to Kattie's face in a vain endeavour to see how her speech applied.

Kattie gave a short sigh and tried again.

"D'ye see the chapel below?" looking down herself to where it leaned against the hill.

"I do that," answered Patsey with relief, feeling that he had failed miserably before.

Then there was a pause.

"Well?" said Kattie a little crossly, flinging a whole handful of pebbles into the water.

Patsey's face fell again. He thought it easy to look down at the chapel, but he evidently had not done all that was expected of him.

"'Tis a mortal nate roof," he hazarded, looking enquiringly at his companion's face; "'twas Paddy Collough's father-in-law put the slates on it."

Kattie blushed to the tips of her pretty ears, and her lips trembled, while Patsey, who, dense as he was, saw her distress, looked piteously around him for inspiration, finally blurting out:

"I'm almost sure he was his father-in-law."

Another silence, and then Kattie, bending her head very low, said, hardly above a whisper:

"I'll be there—in the chapel—a' Tuesday mornin'."

"Will ye now," cried the unfortunate Patsey, his honest face lighting up. "Goin' to see the weddins? Sure, I'll be there, too."

"'Tis to be married mesilf I'll be goin'," cried the girl, looking up with burning cheeks.

"Ye—ye to be married?" gasped the man, so white that the freckles seemed to increase and multiply to an alarming extent.

"Yes, me," said Kattie, beginning to grow cool the moment he lost his head.

"Be the Holy——" burst out Patsey.

"Whisht! Ye musn't curse," said she quickly.

"An' who to?" he asked in a choking voice.

"Andy, the smith."

"I have no word agin Andy," said he slowly; "only—— oh! Kattie, asthore!" stretching out a great, brown hand.

"Why didn't ye say that long ago?" said Kattie, stealing a glance with eyes full of tears as she laid her hand in his.

"Kattie, dear, why would ye marry him?" said Patsey, looking the picture of abject misery.

"Maybe nobody else would have me," said she with a mischievous smile.

"Nobody else!" almost shouted he. "Sure, wouldn't I——"

"Be aisy, will ye," warned Kattie, with the common sense that rarely deserts her sex on these occasions. "Be aisy; ye needn't tell the whole parish. Listen to me," she went on quickly; "'tis only to-day the match is making, but well I know that Andy's owld mother won't let the chance pass. And Andy himself, dacint boy, don't care who he gets to redd up the house fur him. So ye'll see me married to him a' Tuesday if ye don't——"

"Don't what?"

"If ye don't be said by me."

"Sure, I will. Ony tell me what to do."

"Faith, ye want some one badly to mind ye; 'tis little sinse av ye're own ye have," said Kattie, looking with love in her eyes at the eager face that confronted her.

"Well, I'll be said by ye," said Patsey firmly. "Only spake the word."

"Well, thin," said the girl, looking down, "be nixt to me overright the althar a' Tuesday, an'—an' bring—a ring wid ye."

"Ay, faith, will I," said Patsey emphatically; "an' what will happen thin?"

"Lave that to me, ye omadhaun," said Kattie, giving his hand the tiniest squeeze as she turned to go. But Patsey laid his hand on her arm, and, with his honest face full of joy, asked in an incredulous tone:

"An' is it me ye want, Kattie dear?"

"Divil another," said Kattie, looking up fondly.

"Look at that, now!" exclaimed Patsey delightedly; "an ye love me?"—as if it were too good to be true—"me? An' the red head av me an'—all?" he repeated.

"Ay, do I! Have conduct, now, will ye?"

But it was too late, and there was nothing left to do but to smooth her hair as she walked on by his side.

A bright March sun shone on the little grey chapel on the morning of Shrove Tuesday, making the slates look as new as they did on the day Paddy Cullough's father-in-law had put them on, and burnishing the sullen old Atlantic until it looked as if it, too, had put on a glorious wedding garment in honour of its fisher-children. And they, old and young alike, light-hearted as the veriest children, thronged the street that skirted the beach, or assembled in noisy groups on the Green. Everybody was there and in holiday dress. Even Judy Bralligan

had put up the three shutters, on which she kept her accounts in roughly-chalked sketches of the various coins owed her, and had left the corner shop looking as if its eyes were shut; and little Timsie Dwyer had come all the way from Berehaven, wearing the whole of his wardrobe—four waistcoats and three coats—which was his conception of a gala costume. He was the merriest soul on the countryside, as ready for fun as many a man at half his age, and now he was come, by special invitation of the bride-elect, to see Terence Flannigan's daughter married.

Kattie was on the Green with her people, who were reinforced by Andy and his mother, but she gave little heed to them, for she was busy warning Patsey O'Rourke away with her eyes, and eagerly looking for some one in the crowd.

Andy did not force his attentions upon her—in fact, he never looked at her at all—but stood staring moodily out to sea while his mother sang his praises to all around. At last Kattie's eyes brightened, and leaving the others, she went quickly to a little man, who came to meet her with a series of curvets like a rather stiff but high-mettled steed, at the same time waving his hat round his head. It was little Timsie, who strove to express his congratulations thus by dramatic action; but Kattie soon put an end to the spirited display, and turning him sharply round, led him away among the people. When they appeared again the girl's eyes were full of eager expectation, while Timsie's comical old face was screwed up into an expression of intense enjoyment. Then there was a general movement towards the chapel, for the all-important hour had come.

With jokes and laughter the crowd slowly crushed itself in through the open door until the building was densely packed—but with a different congregation from that which a few minutes before had chatted outside, for in his church the Irish peasant is the most devout and reverent of worshippers. As she entered, Kattie had called Patsey to her side with a look, and now he stood close behind her at the altar steps, while behind him Terence Flannigan and his wife were helping Mrs. Lyneham to lead her son forward. Timsie Dwyer had disappeared.

Presently the ceremony began, and the priest, a stranger doing duty for Father Murphy—who was in Macroom, marrying his sister's daughter to a policeman—began at one end of the row of couples before him. Kattie stood trembling, and casting glances of agonised expectation over her shoulder towards the door; Patsey still kept his position behind her, watching her intently, and by her stood Andy, but he seemed to listen to something outside. Father Gallagher had come within two couples of her, and was putting all-important questions to the man in his rich Kerry brogue. In another minute it would be for him who was to marry Kattie Flannigan to express his willingness to receive her as his "lawful wife according to the rite of the holy mother Church"; for this part of the ceremony is gone through with every couple before the good priest blesses the rings, sprinkling them with holy water, "in modum crucis."

One last despairing glance over her shoulder. Ah! her face brightens at last, and her pale cheeks glow once more, for there is a movement in the crowd that packs the aisle, and little Timsie Dwyer forces his way to where Andy Lyneham is standing; he gives a tremendous wink, that completely obliterates half his face, at Kattie, then standing on tip-toe, whispers in Andy's ear. As he did, the lazy blacksmith seemed roused from his lethargy at last, and muttering, "Sure, I thought I heard thim," turned incontinently from the altar and fairly plunged through the people down the aisle, followed by Terence and Mrs. Flannigan, who besought him in loud whispers to come back, and pulling his mother after him, who, with great presence of mind, had firmly grasped the tails of his coat. Meanwhile Father Gallagher had reached the spot where the truant had stood, and while he paused for the little tumult to subside, Kattie quietly motioned her Patsey to the vacant place next her; so when the crowd closed behind the struggling quartette, he found a demure-looking maiden and a man of six feet two, with red hair and a face like a child in surprise, awaiting his services.

"Ye're name, me good man?"

"Patsey O'Rourke, ye're riverince," answered the bridegroom, who had darted a look at the bride for directions. Then the ceremony proceeded.

"Are ye, Pathrick O'Rourke, willing to receive Kathleen Flannigan, here present, as your lawful wife according to the rite of the holy mother Church?"

"I beg ye're riverince's pardin?" said Patsey.

"I will, I will," whispered Kattie, jogging him with her elbow.

"I will, I will," echoed Patsey loudly, and turned to her again for further in-

structions; but she was listening with downcast eyes while the priest put the question to her, and as she answered "I will," in a low voice, there arose outside the sound of eager voices mingled with shouts of laughter and the shrill "Kick-kick-kick-kyar," of a bantam cock in sore distress, while a voice that was unmistakeably that of Gurteen's blacksmith cried piteously, "For the love of Hiven, don't ye pull the illigant tail out av him, Tim Dwyer!" A subdued titter ran through the chapel, and some one said in a loud whisper, "'Tis the way Andy's little hins is got out"—a speech that was followed by a decided movement towards the door by the younger members of the congregation.

Again Father Gallagher had to pause until the commotion had subsided, and the more sporting members of the congregation had retired to see the fun. During the pause Kattie flashed a look of triumphant meaning up at her betrothed, over whose innocent face the light of understanding gradually stole, and soon his great body was shaking with only half-suppressed laughter that threatened to become so violent that she had to pinch him viciously to bring him to his senses. Then the rings were given up to be blessed, Patsey producing his from the lining of his hat, and dropping it twice afterwards before Kattie managed to run her finger deftly through it.

There was nothing left to do now but to sign the register, but before that could be, the hunting party had returned to finish the ceremony. The first to appear was Mrs. Lyneham, her grey hair straggling over her face, and breathless with the chase. Under one arm she held a bantam hen, that covered her with its yellow feathers in its struggles; with the other she dragged her son forward, who gave all his attention to mollifying the feelings of an irate cock half-hidden in his bosom. Timsie Dwyer, who had obligingly joined the rescue party, brought up the rear with two more or less suffocated bantams under each arm.

"Here he is for ye," panted Mrs. Lyneham; "'twas the way—what are ye laughing at, Patsey O'Rourke?" for the newly-made bridegroom was grinning gleefully from behind the newly-made bride.

"I don't want him," said Kattie boldly. "I have no mind for a boy as goes huntin' hins whin he ought to be marryin' before the howly althar."

"Arrah whisht!" said the old woman coaxingly; "the prashte will come back agin and say the words for ye."

"'Tis too late ye are, ma'am," said Kattie, tossing her head. "I couldn't be waitin' for the likes av him, so I just took this dacint boy that was standin' be me," and she put her hand saucily through Patsey's arm.

"'Tis no marriage!" cried Mrs. Lyneham with spirit, while Terence and his wife stood amazed.

"'Tis the only marriage I'll ever make," said Kattie, drawing closer to her husband, and looking with burning cheeks straight at her mother.

"Have ye nothing to say?" cried Mrs. Lyneham, turning to Andy.

"Let her kape Patsey O'Rourke, if she wants him," said Andy simply; "'tis ye made the match for me, tho' I towld ye I had no mind for marryin' at all at all!" and he fell again to stroking the little bantam that tried to peck his way through his coat.

"Lave it as it is, Tirince," said Timsie Dwyer, coming forward and squeezing his hens tight with his elbows so that they should not interrupt him. "Lave it as it is, man, an' give Kattie the hundhred poun' all the same."

But honest Terence felt he had been fooled, and shook his head obstinately, until Kattie cast such a piteous look of beseeching at her mother, that the good woman's eyes filled with tears, and she whispered;

"Tirince, avic! be said by Timsie Dwyer!"

And he was.

THE PLEASURES OF MYSTERY.

Some one or other has said that the coming man will be a person wholly without the saving grace of illusions and doubts. He will, in fact, know everything—except the secret of prolonging his life indefinitely. He will be in communication with Mars. The hidden springs of feeling and thought will be to him as if they did their working openly as the machinery in an iron foundry. He will be as incapable of enthusiasm as of laughter.

Do but think of the flatness of existence on these terms.

Mystery is at present at the heart of the best emotions and the most stimulating hopes that come to us. There would be far less love among us if every personality lay bared to its inmost thought and aspiration. To be sure, the most modern of our writers

maintain that this very fact of living ever under the full glare of absolute publicity is the finest moral tonic in the world. Perhaps it is. Even so a square box may be said to be the most notable illustration of certain mathematical principles. But the square box cannot be considered a beautiful work of art. Nor can we so far consider a human personality divested of all chance of mystery and romance as ideally attractive. It is possible, we repeat, that human beings may get so near to moral perfection that the habit will be acquired of seeking and caring for nothing except moral beauty in our fellow-creatures. Such a future would be a very noble one, but it would know little of the pleasures of mystery.

Love in its early stages is all mystery. How little two people, but just enamoured of each other, really understand each other! Their imagination kindles like a pile of straw upon which a spark has fallen. Each endows the other with many virtues and excellences foreign to them both. It is doubtful whether a young man's fancy or his sweetheart's fancy in this respect is the more vivid. Much depends, of course, upon individual temperament and education. But in any case the ideal figure created in the lover's imagination is always much superior to the man or woman of flesh and blood and common human frailties who inspires it. Taking hold of this point, some may say, very plausibly, that the married life which generally follows upon the ecstatic love of courtship would have a surer hope of happiness if there were less mystery, less of the glamour of romance, about the lovers ere they went to the altar. The question would bear long arguing. But, for our part, we believe in the discipline of petty trials and gradual understanding of each other, which is the common lot with husbands and wives. Many suffer by it, to be sure, and many find it too much for them. But for those who accept it in its true light there is no such educating and perfecting power. Take away the mystery that envelopes every human character, and into what would all married life be transformed? Merely a cold exact bargain. The one party would say to the other: "I see what you are, and you suit me. Will you be kind enough to cast your eyes upon me, and see if I am your complement in your opinion, even as you are, in my opinion, mine?" No clergyman with his solemn prayer-book service would be needed to consecrate such alliances. There would be no risk on either side—at least, it must be assumed so.

Then there is the superb, never-ending mystery that hangs over children. If an infant's future could be forecast by rule of thumb or something equally explicit, what a frigid and sorrowful time its mother would be likely to spend with it! Where would then be the pleasure, say rather the rapture, of the castle-building in which the unenlightened mothers of our day continue to indulge about their babes? "Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top!" the young mother sings as she sways the little treasure, and in her mind's eye already sees him a man, and a great man, of whom she may be prouder than any mother was ever yet proud of her son. He will be handsome and good as well as great, and it will be his old mother's consoling joy, when her hair is grey, to have his children on her knee even as now she has him himself. Is there not pure pleasure in these sweet hopes? And how would it be if there were no mystery in the matter; no doubt, only certainty? There would then be weeping mothers instead of laughing and bright-eyed mothers; and many a poor soul would be deterred only by the hand of the Inevitable from strangling the breath in the quiet, innocent little babe at her feet or pressed against her breast. Among ten mothers now building pretty and ambitious castles about their pink-and-white treasures in the cradle, at least five would be miserable. One would prematurely feel the anguish that should come upon her when five years hence her darling succumbed to croup. And others would look forward stonily to the time of the manhood or womanhood of their babes, when stereotyped calamity had marked them for its victims.

But let us change the subject, though not the theme. Already, thanks to nineteenth-century zeal in exploration, our globe has lost much of the charm of mystery that lay upon it when our grandfathers lived. In Dean Swift's time, Gulliver's adventures, though marvellous, were held credible by many English readers. There were no School Boards in Queen Anne's reign, and half the world provided food for conjecture rather than knowledge. Things were better still in that amazing sixteenth century which, with the discovery of America and the gold of the Incas and the Aztecs, flooded the minds of men with romantic dreams. But the last hundred years have played havoc with us in this respect. Mr. Stanley alone has dealt us

half-a-dozen stinging blows. The Dark Continent is now nothing like its name. We know it almost from end to end, and side to side, along each of its lines of longitude and parallels of latitude. True, Rider Haggard has civilly tried to cheer us back into the old paths of eerie belief; but though he does well in the matter, and gives us momentary thrills, he fails to convince us. His thousand-year-old queens and cavernous treasure chambers are exceedingly welcome, yet when we get to the word "Finis!" it is all up with fancy. We shut the book, exclaim "Pretty good for a lie!" and resume our unromantic work at so much an hour or so much a year, fundamentally unconsoled though the romancer have romanced ever so closely to Nature's lines. As for commonplace "Once upon a times," we laugh them out of court. The tale that presumes to come before us marked across the brow with the words, "I'm a pleasing but wholly improbable story," may be good enough for our children in knickerbockers and short frocks; but it won't do for us. We demand subtle stories of living and moving individuals; and every action and gesture of the persons on the pages must ring and feel true and thoroughly rational ere the book as a whole can be praised.

Among other dead and about-to-be-buried mysteries which have in their day given considerable pleasure—as well as a little anxiety—we suppose our old friends, the ghosts, must be mentioned. Poor dear worn-out shapes! Who nowadays can take the measure of the joy, the unique joy of the conscientious shudder in the ghost tale? It was a bitter-sweet "sui generis"—an experience like no other experience. As a corollary, there was the swift scamper upstairs afterwards, with an eye that shunned the dark corners and a heart that quaked without shame at the sight of any unlooked-for study in black and white—especially white. Of the deep sighs of pleasure and the gratitude to heaven for bodily preservation from ghostly perils which were subsequently the outcome of a snug retreat between sheets and blankets—with eyes tight shut—nothing more explicit need be said. Their intensity cannot be understood by those who cannot feel them. The Psychical Society is not an unmixed blessing, and there are some among us—emotional epicures—who would be heartily glad to enrol ourselves as members of a society in opposition to it.

Only last week my town enjoyed the excitement of its annual fair, with two ghost-shows resplendent in their outer garb of red and gold, and with a Mephistopheles capering on the platform to touch the souls of the lookers-on. Fairs are popularly supposed to be on their last legs. We have outlived their petty tricks and feeble efforts to amuse—so we are told. But you would not have thought this if you could have seen the people trooping up the steps into the shadowy pavilion beyond. Even the rector of the parish was there, with his erudite daughters, and they paid their visit in no carping mood, but, as they declared, eagerly expectant of divers good things. And they had these good things. Perhaps they were not deceived by the optical and other illusions with which the showman provided them. But at any rate they were pleased. As for the general public, it whispered "Oh!" and "Did you ever see the like of that?" and, in short, proved to the hilt that nothing is so piquant as the suggestion of mystery.

And all the while the fat-woman show opposite beat its drum and blew its pipes in vain. The "fat woman" was a failure. There was no mystery about her—not an ounce. She was solid, palpable flesh and blood and bones. The people had seen her like before; she was not a sight to thrill. And so she did not succeed one quarter as well as the ghosts.

Without the lure of mystery—which may be regarded as a form of hope—our colonies would fall somewhat short of emigrants. These do not know all that they are going to face. They see the freehold farm of a hundred and sixty acres, with its barns and haystacks, and the cattle in their yards; but they do not see what intervenes between the mere desire of these excellent things and its achievement. It is in some cases a pity that it should be so. But it is one of the conditions of life.

The pleasures of life are all built on the element of mystery. Literature in its most enjoyable form, fiction, would not attract if on the first page of each novel the reader could ascertain in a moment what fate befell the hero of the book. That agreeable mystery must not be solved until the end of the third volume, or thereabouts. Who would read detective stories if there was no doubt about the criminal from the opening chapter? No; the innocent and virtuous hero must be charged with the crime, must be embroiled in perplexities and woes as biting as Ulysses's own, must seem doomed inevitably to the hangman, and

only be rescued when the rope is, so to speak, round his neck, and all the world has ceased to believe in him, save the fond girl who loves him and is prepared to adore him as a martyr after death.

Thus, too, with the drama. Even the simplest student of stage vicissitudes would perceive that something was wrong if he could discern the fifth act of the play ere the curtain had fallen on the first act.

And so on, up and down the gamut of life's pleasures. From love to eating and drinking, there is mystery in them all. It may be said that there ought to be none in these two last details of enjoyment. When a man reads his menu, he is supposed to know with absolute exactitude what he is about to receive—on a plate and in a wine-glass. But it is not so. Cooks have their supreme moments as well as the rest of us. They are artists in their way. You do not expect an Academician invariably to produce work of equal excellence. It would therefore be unfair to the artist of the kitchen to look for such uniformity in him. An oyster may be good, indifferent, or very good. The touch of genius may be conferred upon the mayonnaise.

Nothing is certain. There is mystery everywhere. Even with the aid of meteorological information in all the papers, no man will venture to say positively that the sun will shine upon him at such and such an hour of the day. In the tropics people weary of the set heat of a cloudless sky week after week without change. It is because they are cheated of something of the pleasure of mystery which we, in more temperate climates, enjoy.

But it is impossible in a short paper like this to treat so great a theme fairly. One may only hint at mystery's many pleasures and invaluable uses. What would any career be worth to its votary if he were without the zest that belongs to hope, which in its turn would be uprooted if there were no mystery about it? Commerce may, without the least exaggeration, be termed a coquetry between the known and the unknown. If the latter factor were without its veil of mystery, it would often cease to be potential, immediately.

There is further the chief mystery, religion. Some people think we can get along very well without it. Others, on the other hand, are striving to strip it of the very mystery that is its essence. Both seem to be singularly lacking in sense and insight. What could religion be if it were not mysterious? As for the world without religion, one can only conjecture what its state would be. History gives us no information on this point, and the sane imagination shirks the problem thus proposed to it.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "The Thirteenth Brylain," "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Benefit of Clergy," "The Vicar's Aunt," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

"Dr. Meredith! I thought I was not deceived in the sound of the wheels!"

It was a miserable morning. The scattered clouds of the night before had united again, and were coming down in a steady, fine rain. But Mr. Swinton did not seem even to know this, much less to heed it. He was standing, bareheaded, on the doorsteps of the Rectory; those same steps where Rose Swinton herself had stood to greet Dr. Meredith a few weeks ago. And he had been standing there some time when Dr. Meredith's dogcart drew up before them, for his bent shoulders were wet with rain.

With his words he came eagerly down another step, and made as if he would have helped Dr. Meredith to dismount, by way of accelerating his movements. But long before those anxious, nervous hands could have helped him, Dr. Meredith had jumped down, and had turned to the macintoshed figure which had sat by his side. He half held out his hand to his assistant, but, apparently recollecting himself, drew back quickly, and leaving the slight figure to clamber down alone, alertly enough, he turned round to Mr. Swinton.

"Come in, sir," he said, with a kindly authoritativeness, "or we shall have you ill next!"

The poor old man looked, indeed, as if Dr. Meredith's prognostication were not at all unlikely to be fulfilled. His spare, bent form was shrunken until it looked about half its proper proportion; his always worn face was aged and thin; and his meek, short-sighted eyes were dulled with grief. He submitted meekly enough to be led into the shelter of the hall, and then he turned his sad old face to Dr. Meredith almost appealingly.

"I'd been watching for you," he said heavily. "I began to think I had made a mistake; but you said you would come early, I knew!"

"And I have come early, Mr. Swinton,"

said Dr. Meredith, making his voice as cheerful as he could, though the sight of the forlorn old father made cheerfulness difficult indeed of attainment. "And I have brought my assistant with me," he added, turning as he spoke to look for Althea.

The grey-clothed figure had divested itself of macintosh and hat, and Dr. Godfrey came forward quickly to be introduced, and acknowledge the courteous bow which old Mr. Swinton roused himself from his anxiety to give.

"He and I thought," continued Dr. Meredith, "that another opinion might be good."

The poor old face seemed to lighten for a moment.

"That's very good of you!" Mr. Swinton said quaveringly. "I know you are doing all you can for her; I've known that all the time. But it's very good of you. She's very ill. Very ill!" he added mournfully. "Nurse says she's had a very bad night. You'll find her very ill, Dr. Meredith!"

"Still, I may find her better than yesterday; there may be some improvement, you know. I'll go up at once."

Dr. Meredith spoke in the brisk, professional tone that is, in itself, to some extent reassuring, and Mr. Swinton looked a trifle less hopeless as he moved to allow Dr. Meredith to mount the staircase. His assistant followed in silence; a silence that she had preserved almost unbroken during their drive. He had told her everything he had to tell her, she had said, when Dr. Meredith began to talk about the case; there was no need for further details. And though her voice was by no means so curt as on the night before, there was a tone about it that made Dr. Meredith respect her wishes.

The odd, dark lines that had been round Althea's eyes when she broke into Dr. Meredith's sitting-room, had deepened during the past hour into heavy shadows; and the fresh air had by no means driven from her face the pallor which strongly accentuated them. It was very set and firm; set into a rigid expression of what seemed to be resolution, before which every other particle of expression had fled. Her eyes were fixed and glowing with a steady light.

As she mounted the staircase that pallor deepened; but her step and carriage matched her expression in firmness of demeanour. Only once, on the top stair, she made a sudden pause, and her hand fell very heavily on the ornamentation of the baluster. But it was so short as to be almost imperceptible; the instant after, with the coolest and most professional self-possession, she followed Dr. Meredith across the landing and through the door that had been instantly opened in response to his knock.

It was a large room that they entered—a room possessing the best aspect in the whole house, and the prettiest outlook from its two large windows. The outlook was hidden now by the dark blinds drawn half-way over the windows to keep out the summer daylight, which, cold though it was this morning, forced its strength searchingly through every cranny. There was something almost pathetic about the traces of girlish occupation which the room contained, and the way in which they were all crushed and subordinated by a stronger touch than poor Rose's own.

The useless nicknacks, the pretty toilet-table trifles, the hundred odds and ends with which its mistress had delighted to garnish her room, were swept into corners to make room for sterner things, which looked oddly incongruous beside them. A fanciful little table in the window, which Rose kept for her smart writing materials, contained now a methodical array of medicine glasses, bottles, spirit-lamp, and half-a-dozen other necessary details. The fresh muslin draperies of the mantel-shelf were all fastened up, and from the wide shelf itself all the photograph frames and bits of pottery in which Rose delighted had been swept away to make room for things which were wanted close to the fire. And all these supplantings were, in their turn, only part of that curious presence, compounded of fear and hope, which haunts every sick-room, and creates an atmosphere of its own.

Dr. Meredith glanced quickly towards the bed, and then began to interchange rapid, low-toned words with the nurse. His assistant stood listening attentively for a moment or so, with her grey eyes riveted all the time to the bed; then she turned and went up to it, silently and suddenly.

It stood in the middle of the room, with its head against the wall, and facing one of the darkened windows; a screen—a pretty Japanese screen that Rose had saved much pocket-money to buy—standing across the end to complete the work of the blinds. It was a moment or so before Dr. Godfrey's eyes, accustomed as they were to such semi-darkness, had adapted themselves to the half-light; and it was not till then that Althea clearly saw what she had

come to see. The pretty, girlish figure lay tossing restlessly and incessantly; the long, thick hair which Rose Swinton had kept always so elaborately arranged had been cut off; the blue eyes were wild and unconscious; and the pretty lips were dry and brown with fever. They moved incessantly, and in a thin, high voice the girl rambled on and on without a moment's intermission; long, incoherent sentences came from those dry lips, never ceasing, but never comprehensible.

The change that the past ten days had made was terrible indeed to see; for an instant, as she stood and looked down at Rose Swinton's restless figure, something seemed to touch and shake Althea's professional composure. A curious short spasm flashed across her face, and a look of intensely passionate feeling of some sort shone out in the great grey eyes; but it was only for an instant, and then Althea's pale face had regained its perfect composure, and she bent over the unconscious girl with keen professional scrutiny and touch.

She had only just ended her brief examination when Dr. Meredith came up to her.

"Well?" he said in a low tone, full of eager anxiety.

Althea drew him away to the window, but even when she had done so, she seemed to find it difficult to begin to speak. Her lips, apparently, were very dry and stiff. Unconsciously he helped her by repeating his question.

"What do you think?" he said in a quick, anxious voice. "What view do you take?"

Althea moistened her lips once convulsively, then, in a low voice, began to give him her ideas and her suggestions.

A quarter of an hour later the two descended the stairs again together. Althea Godfrey had ended all she had had to say, and her lips were set, while her face was, if possible, paler than ever. Dr. Meredith looked a trifle less careworn. To his face had come the relief of a divided burden only. It was very thoughtful, for he was turning over all Althea had just said. She had thought quite as gravely of the case as his own gravest fears; but she had suggested to him a slight variation in the treatment.

At the foot of the stairs, waiting, as he had waited on the doorstep for their arrival, was Mr. Swinton. The heavy old eyes were full of a question, he seemed almost afraid to put into words.

"Is she better?" he said at last quaveringly. "Do you find her any better?"

Before Dr. Meredith could answer, Althea Godfrey had stepped forward and had taken one of the old man's hands in hers with a quick, impulsive gesture that seemed at once odd and natural.

"We hope she may be," she said gently. "We must hope from hour to hour, Mr. Swinton; and we are doing our best."

The desolate old man looked gratefully into the pale young face bent towards his.

"You are very good, sir," he said. There seemed to be no other form of thanks possible to his weary senses. "Very good."

"We shall both be here again this afternoon," added Althea encouragingly.

But the words had the reverse effect to what she had intended. It is impossible to say what definite idea was in Mr. Swinton's mind, confused with sorrow as it was; but he seemed to have fastened all his hopes to the coming of Dr. Meredith that morning, and evidently the thought of letting him go again was a blow he scarcely seemed able to realise.

"You are going," he said hesitatingly, "you are both going? Will you—could you not, one of you, stay, just to watch her, you know? I can send, of course; oh, yes, I have kept the horse ready for days; but it is so long before you can get here. Just to watch her, you know?"

There was something in the unexpected and almost childishly expressed request that was curiously appealing. And it appealed evidently to both the hearers.

Dr. Meredith looked doubtfully at his assistant; his assistant looked steadily at him.

"I will stay," she said firmly. "You can do without me quite well. I'll stay till you come this afternoon."

He looked at her with a look that was more nearly gratitude than any look Althea had had from him since the day of her arrival, and a very faint flush of colour darted for an instant into his assistant's white face. But the next moment it was gone again, and she was quietly giving him a brief message as to some drugs that were to be sent over immediately from the surgery.

It was about five o'clock, and the unnaturally cold, grey afternoon was beginning to look greyer yet at the approach of evening, when Dr. Meredith and the dog-cart drew up for the second time at the Rectory doorway. Old Mr. Swinton was not visible this time, and Dr. Meredith got down, fastened the horse up, and entered

the half-open hall door unobserved. There was a curious deep hush all over the house. No sound of any movement or life was to be heard anywhere. Dr. Meredith stood with one foot on the lowest stair, hesitating as to what course he would take to make his presence known. Just as he had decided to go straight up at once, a quick, light step sounded above, and his assistant came swiftly down to meet him.

Althea's face was drawn into harassed lines. In her grey eyes was visible even more anxiety than his own had held when he had asked her help on the night before. All the force of her expression seemed transformed into this one feeling; and there was behind it, as it were, a suggestion of a heavy strain, which seemed to pervade all her personality. It conveyed the idea of an intensely close struggle, an almost desperate effort.

"I was sure I heard you, Jim," she said in a low, hurried voice. "Come up, will you, and see what you think. I'm afraid it's no good, Jim; I'm afraid I'm beaten. I'm nearly sure I am. I think she is sinking."

Althea gave a quick, heavy sigh.

"I've made that poor dear old thing go and rest," she added, as they rapidly ascended the staircase, "and I shan't call him unless—unless I must. He can do nothing but break his heart."

They had reached the door of Rose Swinton's room. Althea paused for one moment with the handle in her hand.

"I've done my best, Jim," she whispered. "I do assure you I have." And when, after a long half-hour, during which Dr. Meredith had owned to himself and to Althea that he, too, feared that they were on the losing side in the fight that had been going on so fiercely and yet so quietly all that long, cold summer day, the two came out again, Althea repeated her words; repeated them with an emphasis that vaguely haunted Dr. Meredith for the whole evening afterwards. "I have done my very best, Jim," she said very earnestly. "And I will do it—you believe that?"

The two were on the stairs, and as he looked rather wonderingly at her, without speaking, she made a quick movement.

"I must go back," she said. "I'm not coming with you. I shall stay here to-night."

Before Dr. Meredith could answer or remonstrate she had gone back into Rose Swinton's room and shut the door.

Now Publishing,

THE

EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER

CONTAINING

Complete Stories by Popular Writers.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.

Next Month will be published the OPENING CHAPTERS of

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS,

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc. etc.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 289.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLV. BITTER WATERS.

WHAT Penelope said so emphatically was true. She had no fears at all about Philip's safety. She thought he had rushed away to brood over his misfortune, and that, the fog having overtaken him, he had been unable to come back. The word "death" had not really presented itself to her.

She wanted him to return, and that soon, then all the story of her short love and happiness would be over. Oh, it was already over! She knew it from Forster's face, but she could not accept the decree. Her heart rebelled, her proud spirit would not stoop and take up its burden—a burden which she and her uncle had so carefully laid upon their own shoulders.

No, he was not dead, but death was to be her fate; for death, she now realised, may come many times before the body is laid in its last resting-place.

All night Penelope tossed from side to side unable to sleep. Sometimes, she dozed for a few minutes, then she fancied she saw the door opening slowly to let in her father. The evil look of madness was so like the reality which she had seen the previous evening that she started up, uttering a low call for help, only to find herself in the darkness and in solitude. She even struck a match to make quite sure that no one was in the room, and when dawn slowly began to pierce the black veil of night, the Princess, getting out of bed, drew back the thick curtain, and gazed out over the familiar view. Shy and tremulous little pink clouds came early to prepare for the coming of the sun. To-day they had smiling faces; and, with a soft wooing wind to help them, they cleared away the remains of yesterday's mist. Then suddenly the sky began to paint pictures on its pearly-grey palette. First appeared tender yellow and delicate pink washes, then every tone was deepened into stronger streaks of red and orange, till, as if by the help of a magic wand, the sun, the bringer of all life, himself appeared, striding into the arena and demanding the worship due to him from all created beings and of all created things.

Often and often had Penelope watched the sun rise, but never till to-day had the scene struck her with so much awe and with such mystery; never before had she felt so small before inanimate nature.

However, humility was not a state of mind in which she could long remain. As further sleep was impossible, she determined to dress and go downstairs. Philip would by this time have come in, and she would meet him in the presence of Dora and Forster. Afterwards——!

She opened her door, walked down the passage, and descended the stairs leading into the hall. Some one would be there seeing to the comfort of the departing guests. Most likely it would be Philip or her uncle, for the Princess knew that though he was not nobly born Philip's courtesy was never at fault, and that this man of no descent was as much a gentleman as was the greatest noble in the land.

As she came down she saw that the hall door was open, and that the sun now streaming in made glorious patterns on the floor, and danced madly over the old woodwork.

Nero was lying on the steps, but his head was laid low between his paws, as if he had just returned from a long journey. At that moment the butler came through the hall, and Penelope said:

"Williams, has any one come down? When will the carriage be sent round for Mr. Bethune?"

Williams looked up at her, and then, for the first time since his arrival, Penelope saw a look of surprise on the face of the well-trained servant.

"The carriage has been countermanded, ma'am."

Penelope did not ask any other question. She went towards the passage leading to Dora's turret chamber, though she could not exactly tell what she wanted to do nor what she wanted to say to the young girl. She only felt that something had happened, she knew not what, and she would not try to guess.

In another moment she found herself face to face with Forster. He was coming from his sister's room.

"I was looking for you, Mrs. Winskell," he said, and his tone was so strange that Penelope hardly recognised it. The once happy ring in it was gone. "Come in here."

He opened the door of the library, where the sun shone in brightly, and where all was beauty and brightness, making it difficult to believe in yesterday's gloom.

"The Duke sent me to tell you all we know. I could not leave this place before we were certain that Philip cannot be found. Oldcorn and others have been looking everywhere since dawn; they even sent a messenger to the station to see if—if—— but no one had seen him there, and the only supposition is that——" Forster sank down on a chair and hid his face. "You can guess," he groaned. "They say he must have lost his way in the fog, and that he must have fallen in the Rothery. If so it may be some time before his body can be recovered. Some of those rocky passages go so deep down, and the boulders would—would——"

"Oh, no! no! it is impossible," said Penelope, her face becoming deadly pale, "quite impossible. Why do you say that after such a short search? It is preposterous. He knew the paths so well, the fog need not have made him lose the glen path. It is impossible."

Forster started up again. Her vehemence seemed partially to restore his strength, now so nearly exhausted.

"You say so, and I—I feel it too, but I dare not say it to others. Philip could not fall—by accident into the Rothery; but—but oh, if it were not an accident!"

The words seemed to hurt him, and as he spoke he turned his face away.

"The other idea is preposterous also," she said slowly, but her very lips were deadly white, and she slowly placed her hand on the back of a chair, grasping it firmly.

"Is it, Penelope?"

Her lips framed the word "Yes," but no sound was audible. At that moment the Duke came in. His manner had that exaggerated affectation of assurance which people put on when they are face to face with anxiety.

"Penzie! Ah, I see that Mr. Bethune is telling you. By some strange chance all the messengers have missed Philip. It is very extraordinary, very; there is of course some easy solution to the matter, which we cannot see at present. Mr. Bethune, I must insist on your resting. You look utterly worn out. Where is Miss Dora? We must not alarm her."

"I have told her we cannot go to-day," said Forster. "Don't think about me. I shall stay here till Philip is found."

"He will walk in presently and rally us on our fears," said the Duke, taking out his snuff-box and laughing a little. "Penelope is not nervous. Even when you were a girl, child, your courage was always proverbial."

"It is foolish to suppose Philip lost his way," she repeated. "Barring some accident he will return."

"Of course, of course," answered the Duke. "I do not doubt it, not for a moment. In the meanwhile I insist on your coming to eat some breakfast, Bethune."

The Princess took the lead; with firm step and head erect she led the way back to the dining-room. Then she went and questioned Betty, and hearing that Oldcorn was in the kitchen, she had him sent for, and talked with him quite quietly, but with clear decision, as to what he had already done, and what was next to be done to find the missing Philip. Oldcorn shook his head, and declared shortly that the young master was not above ground, on the Rothery estate at least; if he had been he would have been found, for he, Oldcorn, had taken the dogs with him. Stump could find anything, given the scent, and as to Cupear, he was not often wrong. They found the

scent to the house well enough, but lost it in the glen. As to farther up on the mountain, no fool would have ventured there in the mist, and Mr. Philip was no fool. The fog was certainly thick, and there was the river, but——

"Oldcorn, he must be somewhere," said the Princess haughtily. "You must find him. He may have fallen asleep and got numbed by last night's cold and damp."

If he were on the estate, Jim Oldcorn would find him, of this the Princess might rest assured, and as soon as Betty had given him a bit of breakfast, he would go off again, though there were still six men on the search.

At this moment Dora came downstairs with scared eyes and a very pale face.

"Penelope, it isn't true, is it? Where is he?"

"He will be found shortly, I am sure. Don't frighten yourself unnecessarily. In the fog he fell over a boulder or a stump of a tree and cannot get home. The explanation is quite simple. Come and have some breakfast; but really you should not have put off your journey. What will Mrs. Bethune say?"

This explanation might be very simple, but still the morning hours dragged on and nothing was heard of Philip. Forster was out with one search-party, and the Duke himself went with another. For some time Penelope remained where she was, absently looking out of the great bay window in the drawing-room, then she went upstairs and put on her out-of-door things. She could not stay within when every one else was out; even Dora had escaped from the house as if she were flying from a haunted spot.

So, quite alone, the Princess walked out into the sunshine. It was a little cold, and the tints were quickly deepening in colour. All the brightness of the day could not hide the signs of speedy decay which was taking place all around. The migratory instincts of many birds were making themselves felt; soon many of them would forsake the glen where they had sung so joyfully. Faithless to their shelter, they would no longer rejoice the ears of loving listeners.

Penelope took the glen path and tried to recall all that had taken place there. Her girlish visions and her girlish hopes and ambitions rose before her. They had seemed grand and noble to her then, now they seemed so strangely to have altered, and to have turned against her. Then all at once her heart gave a bound. One thing she had learnt, a truth precious above all others. She knew the meaning of the word "love," the joy and the pain of it. Then there flashed into her mind the reason of her presence in the glen—Philip!

The trees seemed to whisper "Philip," and the loveliness of every leaf and all around her added reproach to the sound.

"He will come back," she said, lifting her head proudly, "and I shall live my life with him. If it were not for father it would be easier; we could go abroad, or live in London—not here, not here, where everything is out of tune—— Oh! one can live an outside life, there is so much one can do to drown thought, and the world is big. Society will fill up one's time and all the emptiness."

She had now reached the end of the glen, and before proceeding further leant over the wicket as she had so often done. Her lithe, free step mechanically took the path upwards towards the great mountain. Would Philip be there? No, of course not. They, she and he, had climbed it one day and had met at the summit. The fierce storm had swept over them and then peace had come, because Forster had arrived.

Oh, yes, Philip would come back, of course he would. And life would begin again, life and emptiness. Why had she not been told about this possible and fearful intangible emptiness when she was young? Why had no one warned her about this enemy, and shown her that she might as well try to remove a great mountain as to fight against it? It had conquered her—her, a Princess, descended from such a long line of ancestors! Or was it love that had conquered? Then Forster's image filled her mind. To-day she had tried to put it away every time it had intruded itself upon her thoughts, but even that invisible power conquered her now. His face rose before her mind's eye. She saw his look of horror, and she knew that she had made him fall from his high ideal. The part of him he treasured most, that which had made him master and Philip his disciple, was swept away. Dimly she understood that a man may lose all that the world prizes, and that he may suffer infinity of sorrow, but that he will not suffer so much as he who loses his ideal. Forster had found in her, as he thought, the ideal of womanhood, but through her he had lost his higher ideal of man's union with God, his diviner nature.

Very dimly she saw this, and it made

her climb faster and with more determination up a narrow path. On and on she went, all the time fighting against this knowledge, this new certainty.

Then after what seemed to her to have been no measurable time, so quickly did the minutes fly, she found herself at the tarn. Dark, deep, and mysterious it looked, even in this autumnal sunshine. The sight of it made a break in her ideas. Looking at it, thoughts of her father came crowding to her mind. His clouded intellect had somehow brought out all the worst features of his own character, and now they were strengthened and increased. But added to it all was that unhinging of the brain balance which is often brought upon a man, not by the hand of God, but by his own wilfulness.

Between father and daughter there was some strange link, some strange affinity, which prevented Penelope from feeling that he was wholly wrong, and yet the likeness to herself made her shudder and recoil, as when a mother traces the physical likeness between her innocent child and the drunken man who is its father.

In one thing they were alike; they had both felt a deep-rooted prejudice against the man of meaner birth, the man whose benefits they accepted, but whose personality they rejected.

The smooth, glassy blackness of the tarn for a short time fascinated Penelope. It acted upon her brain as did the magic mirror upon the minds of the ancients, and as she gazed she saw a face gradually taking shape from some mysterious nebulous substance. She watched its birth and its developement with the eagerness of a maiden asking for the one she loves best to be revealed to her. Little by little it was evolved out of misty nothingness, and slowly, very slowly, it took form. Then an icy chilliness took possession of her, born of an inexpressible horror; a beautiful face was before her, of beauty unmistakeable, but it was her own face, and on its features and in its eyes was the hideous look of mad cunning which she had seen on her father's countenance only the evening before.

With a low, barely repressed cry of horror, she started to her feet and hurried up the dangerous ridge leading to the summit of the mountain. She felt impelled to go on and on, away from that face, away from herself, and her fear gave her courage and strength. She did not feel the cutting rocks as she grasped them with ungloved hands, she found no difficulty in the ascent, and not for one moment did she turn giddy at the sight of the precipice below, so that in half an hour she stood near the cairn and viewed all its wonderful glory, the wide plain of mountain-tops, a sea of beauty interspersed with waves of blue and purple glories, while the winds, blowing softly round her, seemed to whisper:

"All these things will I give thee, if——"

CHAPTER XLVI. WILL HE BE FOUND?

She sat down on the slab of stone under the shelter, and held her breath. She knew not what the whisper meant, her limbs seemed in an instant to be paralysed, and only her brain was active. Her thoughts chased each other to the rhythm of these words:

"Philip is dead—if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

"Philip is dead." Before this all her thoughts, all her unspoken words had been, "Philip is alive, and the future is emptiness"; now the words, "Philip is dead," seemed to echo from every neighbouring hill. Even the torrents far below softly murmured it, and the desolate silence of this great mountain-top seemed to breathe the unspoken words, "Philip is dead."

That face, so beautiful and so terrible, which she had seen reflected in the tarn, had first suggested the thought, and it was the horror of the suggestion which had hurried her up to this lonely spot. But the words were here too. Penelope at last, instead of turning away her mind from this thought, boldly faced it.

"If he is dead, how can I help it? If—if he at last came to realise the truth, how was it my fault? It was not mine, but his, his own, his very own; he would not believe me when I told him so. Perhaps he—he—— no, he lost his footing, he was reckless; how could I tell what he would do? How could I help it? Have I ever ordered my own life? Never, never, but now—now——"

She stood up suddenly; she was alone on the mountain-top, alone, but she must soon return to the valley. It was a long way back to the Palace, and she must not further add to the anxiety of the household. She turned to look eastward and westward as she had often done before, wondering which of the distant views was the more wonderful; to-day both seemed meaningless, both merely flung back her thought, "Philip is dead; you are free, free as we are, as these

wild mountain-tops are free." "Free as the air," echoed the breeze, brushing against her face and lifting the straying meshes of her hair. For the first time in her life, if Philip were dead, she thought, she could say she was free.

Then hastily leaving this region of wild thoughts she hurried forward, determined to descend alone down the dangerous path by which she had ascended. When she at last safely reached the black tarn she would not linger one moment near to its terrible reflection, but hurried on along the familiar way, her agile feet scarcely touching the ground as she ran, rather than walked, back again towards her home.

Quick as she had been, when she neared the Palace, the sun was already descending towards its appointed resting-place. It must be nearly four o'clock, she remembered, and she asked herself what would be the news she would hear?

Looking on far ahead, and straining her eyes towards the wicket gate, she thought she saw a figure standing there as if waiting for her. "Whose figure was it?" she said to herself; then, as she came nearer, the form took shape, and before she could see the features her own face flushed. It was Forster. She was now almost afraid to go on, only there was no other alternative. She must go home that way, for if she took any other path, it would be almost an hour longer before she could reach home. It was certainly Forster, and he must be looking for her, for she must be very plainly seen as she stepped quickly down with the free step of a mountain maiden.

Forster did not take one step to meet her, but she felt no resentment, she was only anxious to hear what he would say and how he would look. Had it been possible to avoid this meeting, she felt that at this moment she would have done so, but it was not possible.

Summoning her old dignity to her aid, she slowly approached him. Why did he not speak—at once?

"I hope you have not been looking for me?" she said, as soon as she was near enough to him.

"For you?" said Forster in a tone of surprise. "No, we have looked for him all day, and—and the search is hopeless."

"Who says so?"

"They all say so. If he had been where mortal man could find him, we should have found him. I must prepare you for the truth."

The words did not sound commonplace as he spoke them. On the contrary, they reminded one of the judge delivering sentence to the prisoner at the bar.

Penelope was silent, and Forster repeated:

"I am certain Philip is not where the eye of man can see him."

"It is too soon to say that," she answered in a low voice, but her tone carried no personal conviction with it.

"No, we have been using every available means. And these shepherds are people whose keen glances take in everything."

"But it is impossible to search everywhere. In the opposite wood, for instance, no one could——"

"Jim Oldcorn can be trusted; his opinion is that——" Forster paused; his tone was hard and dry as if he were recounting something quite disconnected with himself. "His opinion is that Philip is dead, and that the hidden depth of the Rothery can alone give up the secret."

They had, as it so happened, by this time reached the very spot where so lately Philip had stood beside them. Penelope did not recollect it, but Forster suddenly stopped short.

"It was here, here, Mrs. Winskell, don't you remember? Is it nothing to you, that you can be so calm? Don't you understand that as far as can be known Philip is dead, and that we—no, I killed him? Have you no word of—of regret or sorrow for him, the truest friend on earth?"

He spoke hurriedly and sternly, but he did not come one step nearer to her. Penelope would have allowed no one else to speak to her like this, but before him she was silent, helpless. His anger hurt her acutely.

"Why do you say all this to me? Your words have yet to be proved, and besides—besides, no Winskell was ever a hypocrite."

"This is not the time to be proud of such poor virtues," he said scornfully. "Penelope, don't you see that this makes me—me—Philip's murderer? Can't you understand that, if nothing else?"

"Hush, don't speak so loud. Don't say such things. We are not answerable for the actions of people who wilfully place themselves in danger. It is false, all false."

"Why?" he asked all at once, mentally changing places with her and trying to catch at a straw of hope.

But that "why" was not answered, for voices were heard close at hand, and

Penelope walked on quickly, whilst, as if he did not even wish to be seen in her company, Forster turned back to meet the speakers.

It was the Duke and Jim Oldcorn, both looking weary and spent.

"Ah, Forster! how shall we break it to her? There seems to be no hope. Jim thinks the same; he says there has not been a yard of ground left unvisited, and I verily believe it is true. It is most strange, most unaccountable! We know he did not go anywhere by rail; besides, why should he? He had not time to get much beyond the estate, and the dense fog would have prevented him going quickly anywhere on unknown ground."

"The Rothery," said Forster.

"Yes, that is, I fear, the real solution, the only one in fact. He must have been wandering home and have missed his path, and fallen in. The torrent would bear the body into one of those underground passages, and it may be years, or never, before any traces are discovered. The water so destroys the scent that the dogs failed to follow it up."

"The news will be in the papers," said Forster, making a great effort to be calm. "Perhaps, if by chance he has been heard of——"

"But we must telegraph to his father. Really it seems an awful catastrophe to have to announce."

"We must not give up hope yet, we must not. I can't believe—and yet——"

"I met your poor sister wandering about looking like a ghost. I think, Bethune, this is now hardly the place for so young a girl."

"No, I think you are right; I will take her home to-morrow and come back soon, directly I can, for I must be of use."

"Thank you, you are a true friend."

"Me? Oh, no, don't say that!"

"My dear fellow, you are quite unnerved; but, indeed, Bethune, for Penzie's sake we must both keep up. She has enough to bear, poor child. So young and left a widow."

"A widow?"

"Why, yes. Philip's death will leave her in a very sad position."

"A widow!" repeated Forster, and then he followed the Duke in silence, whilst Oldcorn, telling the latter that he must go to the farm to see after the King's wants, left the two to proceed home alone.

Penelope was still standing in the hall when they entered. She was white and motionless, but there were no tears in her eyes.

"My dear child," said the Duke, coming close up to her, "I don't know how to tell you; I was saying so to Forster just now." He took her chilly hands in his. "There has been no trace found of Philip, not one; it is a pure mystery. But now it can hardly be doubted that—that—he has fallen into the Rothery, and if this is so, it may be months before we discover any trace of him."

"You must telegraph to—to his people," said Penelope in a voice that sounded far off and as if frozen.

"Yes, I shall send the dog-cart to the station, and telegraph from there. There is time yet before dark, and Joe must sleep at Meretown to-night. I don't think he can get back."

"No, he must sleep there."

"But you, my child," the Duke gave a searching glance at her face, "you—you must take care of yourself."

He hardly knew what to say. Her calmness was very unnerving. A man hates a woman's tears, but is almost more upset when he sees her possessed of the fortitude of a man.

"Does Dora know?" she said wearily.

"No, not the last hopeless news. Bethune says he will take her home to-morrow."

"Yes, that will be best."

"But he will come back to help us."

Penelope heaved a little sigh of relief. It was better to have him here as he was than not at all. Some day he would leave off looking as he did now. He would see it was not her fault. She had never done anything which was against her ideas of honour.

"I will go to her," she said, and moved away, walking very gently out of respect for the dead, and as the two men involuntarily watched her, it seemed to one of them that she was the most perfect woman in creation, but to the other she appeared as the star for which he had longed, but which, when grasped, had turned to scorching fire. The pain of that burn was still exquisite.

Dora was alone, sitting disconsolately by the window. Her face expressed a new feeling of despair, a feeling she had never before understood or experienced.

The Princess entered the room with the same quiet, proud step.

"Dora!" she said softly, and Dora started up.

"Oh! have you heard anything?"

"No, nothing. My uncle says that—that——"

"No, no," said Dora, shrinking a little, "not that."

"That there is very little hope now."

"Oh, Princess! and—and——" The girl hid her face in her hands, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Hush, hush—what?"

"And you did not love him!"

"No, I did not love him. I have told you so."

"After Forster, I always thought that he was the noblest man on earth."

"After Forster," repeated Penelope under her breath, but Dora did not hear her.

"And you never, never cared about him, whilst he loved you so much. I see it now." Then she glanced up at her and saw the look of haughty pride on Penelope's face.

"I ought not to say this, but I can't help it. I always thought that—that——"

"Dora, for Forster's sake never say such a thing again. If not for mine, at all events for his, for Forster's sake."

THE OLD ROAD TO OXFORD.

THE old road to Oxford starts, as one might expect, from Oxford Street. Not that the latter can be considered old as a street, and its present magnificence is of very recent date, for thirty years ago or so one remembers it as a paltry kind of thoroughfare. But, anyhow, here is the track that, leading past the old hospital of St. Giles, brought the travellers out upon the bare fields adorned by the hideous Tyburn tree.

If you are for the coach, indeed—the "Age," which runs on alternate days from Northumberland Avenue to Oxford—there is an actual start from Charing Cross, but at one point or another the main road is soon reached, which runs broad and fair before us, surely the handsomest and noblest of all approaches to great London town. With the fresh turf of the Park; the tufted groves; the sparkling waters; and over all the bright haze of the teeming town, out of which rise the tall towers of Westminster; with the jingle and rattle of all the gay world in the ears, and the sight of it, with all its carriages and horses, its horsewomen curvetting hither and thither, there is nothing finer anywhere than the view from the top of coach or omnibus as you rattle past the railings of Hyde Park and the stately mansions of Tyburnia on a fine summer morning.

Notting Hill, too, is cheerful enough with its traditionary gate, that once levied toll on all the world on wheels; and then comes Shepherd's Bush Green, where the old thatched cottage, associated by tradition with a conspiracy against the life of the Lord Protector, is now no longer to be seen. There is some decadence here, perhaps, in the hitherto pleasant level, and in nomenclature we are lowered a peg to the "Uxbridge" road; but presently we rise again from Acton vale by the hill, where we see the grounds of old Berrymead Priory, cut up into new streets and redolent of bricks and mortar. But Acton High Street is still quaint and pleasant, and then we come to cheerful Ealing, which has quite the aspect of a watering-place, with its breezy common, its donkeys and donkey-boys, and one half expects to get a blink of the sea at the top of the hill. But no! all is street again right away to Hanwell, where something like country really begins to appear, with a glimpse of the pretty valley of the Brent and its encircling hills. From Hanwell we are all on the flat, the great plain of the ancient Middlesex forest, all very fertile and pleasant, but where the air is a trifle thick, and the soil a thought heavy. And we have brickmakers at work, and factories here and there as Hayes is past, and here we have

> The slow canal and yellow-blossomed vale;

for the meadows, along which passes the Grand Junction Canal, are all bright with buttercups, and the arable land is still more yellow with the flower of the mustard plant. Then comes Hillingdon, a kind of annexe to bigger Uxbridge, with big public buildings in the way of workhouse and barracks, and then by a gentle ascent, through a very rich and fertile track to Uxbridge itself—a pleasant, thriving little town, which has still preserved some of the picturesque features of a former age.

It is Saturday, and there is something like an old-fashioned market going on beneath the pillared arcade of the old market-place. Here are stalls of every description, with provisions, confectionery, a taste of millinery, toys and trinkets, and a hundred other things, and a crowd of people too, really marketing, with their baskets and big packages. Out of the throng rises a quaint balustraded staircase

conducting to what was once the corn-market above. Years ago those stout pillars would almost groan under the sacks of corn piled up layer upon layer in these old rooms, for the corn-market at Uxbridge was a pitched market, where grain was sold in bulk only, and not by sample. There is a corn-market still at Uxbridge on Thursdays, but the farmers now bring their sacks of wheat in their pockets—as schoolboys carry marbles.

Cheek by jowl with the turret of the market-place is the tower of the old church, squeezed up in a corner as if room had been precious in the days when it was built. The whole scene, with the quaint gabled houses looking down on the general throng, has hardly changed very much since the days when the Roundheads and Cavaliers met to try and settle the contest which was desolating the land; when all in England, and in Scotland too, were asking if it would please Heaven to send peace upon this treaty at Uxbridge.

The Church, too, comes into the plot, for here it was that the first Sunday after the Commissioners of the Parliament arrived at Uxbridge, the Reverend Christopher Love, a stiff Presbyterian, preached a sermon which gave such offence to the Royalists that one of the first acts of the King's Commissioners was to demand satisfaction in these terms: "Wee have certain information from divers persons present in Uxbridge church yesterday that there was then a sermon preached by one Mr. Love, in which were many passages very scandalous to His Majesty's person, and derogatory to his honour . . . therefore we desire justice against the man that he may have exemplary punishment."

The Parliamentary men, who comprised the Earls of Northumberland, Salisbury, Denbigh, Denzil Hollis, Harry Vane, and others, replied in an evasive manner, and no harm at that time came to Mr. Love for his boldness. But the sequel is curious; for some years after, when the second Charles had swallowed the Covenant and had been crowned at Scone, Mr. Love was found to be implicated in a correspondence with his co-religionists in Scotland, tending to a restoration of the monarchy. Love was condemned to death, but great interest was made to secure his pardon. Cromwell was then in Scotland, and was appealed to in favour of this zealous and popular preacher; and it is said that he despatched an order to respite the execution of Mr. Love, with the intention of granting him a pardon. The messenger who conveyed the letter, however, fell into the hands of some Royalists, who overhauled his despatches. And sundry of the band had heard Mr. Love's sermon at Uxbridge, and recalled his bitterness against the late King. "Let the fellow suffer, then!" they cried as they burnt the letter of respite. So Mr. Love was executed on Tower Hill, a few days before the battle of Worcester was fought, which settled the business for a time. But the sermon at Uxbridge was dearly paid for.

Now, if anybody wants to sample the road to Oxford after the fashion of the corn merchants, in a very small compass, there are few pleasanter drives than from Uxbridge to Gerrard's Cross, a distance which a small one-horse 'bus performs in something under an hour.

There is something refreshing in the leisurely performance of the country omnibus; the preliminary chaff at the station with the rosy country cabdrivers; the chat with the shopmen who bring parcels, en route to the rural inn-yard, whence the final and official start is made. An ancient white horse prances bodily, assisted by a few supporting irons, over the inn door.

Surely Cromwell put up at the "White Horse"—anyhow, Colonel Fleetwood did at the "Chequers," on the other side of the road. And there is the old "Sun" opposite, which once illumined a long stretch of the high street, and which assuredly shone alike on stern-faced sectaries and roystering Cavaliers in the stirring days of old. And when the claims of the present have been disposed of, with the case of a stout old dame with a huge basket, who wants to travel half-price, away we rattle down the high street, and so to the picturesque exit from the town by the old bridge that gives it a name, and, indeed, first brought it into existence.

Over the road hangs the jolly old sign of the "Crown," while a board at the gable end of the inn announces this as the "Old Treaty House," which indeed it is, and a handsome old mansion with projecting bays and heavy mullioned windows, something like Haddon Hall on a small scale, and a genuine old relic of the days of the Tudors. When the "Treaty" was about it was the house of one Mr. Carr, and the Commissioners met in a fine old wainscoted room, which is still well preserved. One would like to taste the treaty ale—Oliver's entire from the Huntingdon Brewery. But our coach rattles on, and

over the twin bridges that cross the canal and the gently winding Colne. "That's where the best eels come from," says the driver, pointing with his whip to the stream that comes wimpling down among old mills and malt-houses. And have we not seen Colne eels announced in the fishmongers' shops as something distinctly precious? Perhaps it was only the exigencies of metre that suggested:

The Kennet swift for silver eels renowned.

Anyhow, the Colne has now the call in the market. Pope, when he rather unhandsomely alluded to "Cole's dark streams," could hardly have then visited the river at Uxbridge, where it is as bright and pleasant as one could wish to see. And, looking back, what a charming little picture is formed by the river, the bridge, and the gaily-painted barge, that rests in a nook of the old canal, with horses resting, too, and immersed in their nosebags, while a woman with a bright shawl over her head passes briskly along with a bucket!

Away we go along the level road, everything in full luxuriance, lush meadows, trees and copses, hedgerows full of wild flowers, and stretches of willow-bordered streams. Then there comes a hill, a strong, steady ascent, and it proves to be the frontier of a region altogether different from any we have yet passed through. It is Red Hill, so called from the red sand of which it is composed, but although steep it is not such an ascent as it was before the era of fast mail-coaches. For the old road of all winds up to the level of a little inn, which now, like a feudal castle on a small scale, looks down on the tops of vehicles and people's head-gear as they pass below. It was deemed a grand work in its day, no doubt, this cutting away the crest of a hill to accommodate the King's highway; and Bob Logic, as he posted up from Oxford—for it was in the Tom and Jerry era that the thing was accomplished—must have viewed the works with amazement.

From the top of the hill a charming view is spread out of all the country we have quitted: Uxbridge with its roofs and turrets, lying on the slope of a gentle hill, the river winding on its way to the distant Thames, whose valley lies in the bright haze of distance, while a dark storm-cloud hovers over the white towers of Windsor, and the Surrey hills in long ridges fade on the distant horizon. In front of us is a pleasant, undulating, well-wooded country, showing broad cornfields with the bloom of health on every blade, and crowned with the abundance of their yield, meadows, copses, sheepfolds, distilling mingled odours, not of Araby, but of tar, and wool, and turnips, but intensely rural, too. Shepherds look out from their hutches—whence they watch their flocks by night; here and there a pleasant farm-house lies half concealed among the trees. Here and there, too, a little hamlet shows itself apologetically, as it were, so tiny is the space it occupies among the broad fields and wealth of land about it. Yet the cottages are roomy and substantial, of good solid brickwork not devoid of ornament, with the cachet of the early eighteenth century upon them.

No, those cottages were never meant for labourers—our driver agrees—"Most likely for the old Buckinghamshire lace-workers who lived about here." There is nothing left but these small dwellings as memorials of a vanished people Their descendants are to be found in the great manufacturing towns. Nottingham has its share; and Mrs. Gaskell in "Mary Barton" shows us how the old Buckinghamshire folk thronged to Manchester in the early part of the century. Mary's mother was a Buckinghamshire woman, and Aunt Esther brought her fatal beauty and love of distinction out of the same prolific shire. And the people are getting elderly who remember seeing old women sitting outside their cottage doors, making pillow lace. Their sons and daughters were gone, and few ever came back to visit this pleasant, lonely land.

Up hill and down dale brings us to the top of a hill where there is no dale in immediate prospect, but where a wide open heath stretches out fringed with houses, and with a strange-looking church rising among a tufted edge of firs and wind-tossed elms. Is it a church, though, this wonderful structure? "It is a church, sure enough," our driver assures us, "and was built by two maiden sisters." Oh, yes! we have heard of the two maiden sisters before, they occur often in the folk-lore of churches. They had but one trowel between them, eh? which they chucked from hand to hand. "Never heard of that," says the driver stolidly, "but they do say it was all done by day labour. And as a monument to a brother who was killed—no, not in the Crusades, but it might have been the Crimean War. But it's all written down on the church tower." And so it is if one could read it from the padlocked wicket gate. After all it is a

little disappointing to find that there is no folk-lore about the matter, but that two maiden sisters really built the church at their own expense, and after some Italian model, with campanile and dome, and not uncomely, after all, though not exactly in correspondence with surrounding scenery.

But here our little omnibus finishes its journey, and taking a turn about the surrounding common, disappears among the heather. This open plain, it seems, bears the name of Gerrard's Cross. Research has failed to discover who Gerrard was or what his Cross—perhaps he was a highwayman, or possibly only the victim of a murder. But the scene is not unknown to fame as a favourite meet of foxhounds. The Queen's and the Old Berkshire have both their appointments here in the season, and then doubtless there is animation enough; the dogs with waving sterns, the sleek horses, the bright red coats and shiny top-boots, the crowd of witnesses around, all this must be lively enough, and the roomy old inn of the coaching period with its abundant stabling, "loose boxes for hunters," and what not, must feel itself among the old times again with all the bustle.

Before the old inn is a fine old sign, a bull of formidable aspect, and just beyond are the twisted iron gates that open into Bulstrode Park. Famous all over the Chilterns were the Bulstrodes, to whom tradition assigns a sturdy Saxon origin. When the Normans came they were known as Shobbins, and valiantly repulsed the strangers from their native heath. But making terms with the Conqueror, the head of the family rode up to Court on a tawny bull of the wild native breed, his seven sons forming a body-guard about him. Hence the name and the "achievement" that swings from the old sign.

It may be supposed that the Bulstrodes did not value the Stuarts much when their time came, and at the beginning of the civil wars Henry Bulstrode mustered the fighting men of the three Chiltern Hundreds under a commission from the High Court of Parliament, and fought at the side of his neighbour Hampden. But not long after the main line of Bulstrodes failed for want of male heirs, and the domain was sold. The infamous Jeffreys held the place for awhile. The Bentincks followed, and more recent associations are with that pleasant Duchess of Portland, who made a sort of Rambouillet of the place for the "précieuses" of her time, with Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Montague, of the "feather hangings," as aides and inmates. Finally, after passing through the hands of the Somerset family, the place went to Sir John Ramsden, who has built a new house on the old site, crowning it with the old rampant bull.

But what a Salvator Rosa-like glen is this we are coming to, the road winding into the hollow and lost in dim shadowed recesses! If it were not that the banks of the ravine are all in a blaze of rhododendron blossoms, the place might be called "horrid-looking," and just where you might expect to be called on to "stand and deliver." But if there be traditions of highwaymen, they are unknown in the neighbourhood, though here is a veteran stone-breaker who might be expected to have heard something about them. "No, sir, never heard o' no highwaymen other than us chaps as mends the roads. But there's burglars, sir," continues the old man, brightening up, "broke into Bulstrode House, they did, the night afore last, only they was frighted away by a maidservant as banged her door at 'em."

There are tramps also, and the road is lonely enough. Here are two sturdy but wretched-looking vagrants seated under a high bank by the side of the road. They whisper together, and one comes forward. "Help a poor chap along the way, walking all last night; come from Birmingham and meaning for London." The scene is picturesque enough, the wooded gorge, the dark thundery sky, the tattered vagrants. But they are harmless enough, and pass along.

The way is delightful; the park, separated from the road by a low open railing, is of all things the most charming; fine groups of trees; wonderful sweeps of greensward; the house crowning a knoll and nearly hidden in foliage. What verdure! what freshness! the birds in full song, rooks lazily cawing, the wind soughing among the branches. The only thing to complain of is the almost oppressive scent of the hawthorn, with the showers of white petals that fall continually and whiten one like a snowstorm; the road, too, is white with the fallen blossoms. It might be counted, along with the disturbance caused by the nightingales, as among the exquisite distresses of this favoured region.

And all is complete solitude. A mile without a house or a human creature by the way. And then there comes along at full tilt a tramping family as wild as any lot of savages. An ill-looking man, a drabbish

woman, and half-a-dozen little boys, the eldest hardly ten, skirling along the road, and two more infants in an old perambulator, which holds also a little bundle that contains all the worldly possessions of this thriving family!

Where Bulstrode Park gives out we have Wilton Park on the other side of the road, with pleasant drives and avenues, and a more genial aspect, for cricket is going on in one well-rolled corner, and the way through the park is hospitably thrown open to the coach, which just now we meet skimming along from Oxford, the guard sounding a cheerful note on the horn as his scarlet coat lights up the wooded glade.

And then Beaconsfield begins, called Beckensfield by all the countryside, the name having nothing to do with a beacon, it seems, but with the Beechen Forest, that gave its name to the dwellers therein, and to the county. Such a wide street with shops and inns, and a handsome church close by with a good square tower, but not striking within save for some fine old altar tombs, more or less despoiled by time, which are said to have belonged to the old Bulstrodes. Edmund Burke lies beneath the centre aisle of the church, under a modern brass; and in the churchyard, under a noble old walnut-tree, sleeps Edmund Waller the poet. And a fine marble monument he has, obelisk, urns, and slabs with inscriptions, all recently cleansed and shining as marble ought to shine. The walnut-tree, too, is appropriate, for such is, or was, the crest of the Wallers, who seem to claim kinship with the ancient Dryads.

Beyond Beaconsfield the road is a little dull, perhaps, for a mile or two, and then you come to Loudwater, a village with a pleasant heath, from which there is an enchanting prospect of the Thames in some of its loveliest reaches. But our way is up the valley, which is of the simple pleasant character of the chalk formation, with a stream, and mills, and meadows, and marshy patches, and the rounded forms of the chalk downs in the distance.

Then we reach High Wycombe, placed, as its name implies, high up on the spurs of the Chilterns, a handsome market-town with a pleasant high street and old-fashioned market-place. Wycombe had many industries in the old time—cloth-weaving, lace-making, straw-plaiting—but these are gone, and now the cane-bottomed chair is paramount. You meet them on the roads, all the subsidiary villages are full of them; chairs are the circulating medium hereabouts, and you buy houses and lands for so many hundred dozen chairs.

But a hundred years ago Wycombe was something of a military centre, and in 1794 General Gwynne was raising a regiment of cavalry there. Strange stories were told of the cruelties practised on recruits, of floggings and ferocious drills, and of cruel Major Shadwell, who was afterwards shot by a deserter when commandant at Maidstone. But a recruit who was there in 1794 seems to have experienced nothing but kindness from his officers, and yet he was the awkwardest of the awkward squad, and when he mounted his horse everybody cleared out of his way. This was Comberbatch, alias S. T. Coleridge, who would scribble Latin verses on the stable walls, and correct the faulty quantities of the officers' mess. Had it been De Quincey, now, who had enlisted, what charming pictures we should have had of old Wycombe, and what analytic details of a little incident that occurred at the time!

For it was in the winter of 1794, one dark stormy night, that the night mail stopped to change horses at Wycombe, and the guard, as was his custom, ran up to the post office for the mail-bag. The postmaster, not to be robbed of his night's rest, would, when he heard the guard shouting for the bag, lower it by a string from his bedroom window. To-night the string hung there but no mail-bag, and the scared face of the postmaster appeared at the window in response to the other's shouts.

"Why, you've got it," he cried.

For it seems that some rogue had watched the play of postmaster and guard, and starting a minute before the latter, had taken his place, and snatched the mail-bag. The culprit was caught in trying to negotiate some letters of change that formed part of the booty, and turned out to be a young fellow of hitherto good character named Noah Pierce. Strange to say he was not hanged, but transported, and, perhaps, his descendants are still flourishing in the colonies.

To increase the military distinction of Wycombe, a military staff college was founded there in 1799, which formed the nucleus of the present military college at Sandhurst, to which place it was removed in 1812.

Beyond Wickham lies West Wycombe, with its modern church in an old British camp on the summit of a hill, though the village has climbed down to the valley.

And here the road divides. The coach follows the rather longer but more picturesque route by Princes Risborough and Thame; but the old coach road lies across Stocken Heath, once famous for highwaymen.

Each main road had its accepted hero among the knights of the pad, and ours is Jack Shrimpton, who was born at Penn, over the hills yonder, of honest, reputable parents, but who took to the ways of the idle 'prentice, enlisted in Wood's Horse, deserted, and took to the road. "Did always the most damage between London and Oxford, insomuch that scarce a coach or horseman could pass him without being robb'd."

And in the woods here between Wickham and Stocken church Jack overtook a Middle Temple barrister, who admired his stout roadster and offered him thirty guineas, which was all he had about him, for the animal. "Mine is a horse," replied Jack, "worth its weight in gold, and if you was to know all, has procured me more money than ever Bucephalus got for Alexander." And then he robbed the lawyer of his guineas and rode off.

At Gerrard's Cross, too, Shrimpton was at home, and robbed his friend Littleton, "a face painter, of Silver Street, and three or four other coaches" that were then in sight. He returned his friend's money secretly, with interest. And meeting once a farmer with bailiffs hauling him to gaol for debt, he paid the debt and handed the farmer the acquittance, and afterwards pounced upon the bailiffs and robbed them of all they had, galloping off chuckling at having done a good deed in a profitable manner.

Such exploits naturally endeared him to people who had nothing to fear from highwaymen, and many regretted his fate when he was hanged at Bristol for shooting a watchman in a drunken brawl.

But night is drawing on, the road is lonely and eerie, and there is not much in the way of a lively character, although the country, if one could see it, is full of quiet charm, but,

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight!

And here is Wheatley Bridge, over the Thame, where "Mull Sack" stopped the waggon that was taking the soldiers' pay to Oxford and Gloucester, in the days of the Commonwealth, when the daring rascal sacked four thousand pounds. But after all, it is comforting to see the myriad lights of Oxford glimmering afar.

A good many years ago Alexander Pope rode the same journey, and describes its close in a letter to Teresa Blount:

"The shades of evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw. About a mile before I reached Oxford all the bells tolled in different notes; the clocks of every college answered one another and sounded forth—some in deeper, some in softer tone—that it was eleven at night."

And happy travellers by road may still enjoy the charm that Pope depicts. True, a whole town has sprung up on the way, and the approach is by rows of glittering lamps; but there is the old unrivalled Oxford, over Magdalen Bridge, and Magdalen's unrivalled tower clearly cut in the silver moonlight.

THE STORY OF A POSTCARD.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

LYON THESIGER was standing at his study window looking idly out on to the lawn. It was August, and the wind that fanned his cheek was warm and balmy. Children's voices floated towards him on the breeze; the vague scent of roses and honeysuckle was in the air. He stood there, smiling.

The sun shone in at the muslin-draped, quaint old casement windows, and threw brilliant shafts of light along the dark, polished floor. It shone, too, on the golden head of a fashionably-dressed woman who was sitting in one of the capacious arm-chairs that stood by the fireplace, and who was fanning herself with a gently discontented air.

"Really, Lyon," she went on, in her languid, well-bred tones, continuing a conversation that had evidently been begun some time before, "you must take my advice in this instance; you must indeed. You are not doing your duty by those children."

"They seem very happy," said Thesiger, as a burst of childish laughter came to his ears. "Isn't it a pity to disturb them?"

"They must be educated, my dear. You would not like poor Isabel's children to grow up ignorant, unpolished little heathens, I am sure."

"Oh, come," said Thesiger, his smile vanishing at the sound of his dead wife's name, "that is putting things a little too strongly, Gertrude."

"Not a bit," returned his sister undauntedly. "Patsy and Dick are both as ignorant as they can be, and I don't believe Dolly knows her letters yet."

"Well," said Thesiger, turning from the window with a long-suffering air, and throwing himself down on a sofa opposite his sister, "what is it you want me to do?"

"Really, Lyon, you are a most exhausting person to talk to," said Lady Devereux, waving her fan rather vehemently to and fro. "I have spent the whole afternoon in explaining my views to you."

"Oh, yes; I think you did mention a school for them," said Thesiger, pulling out his cigar-case; "but you know quite well I shall never send them to school, Gerty."

"Then you must have a governess. I dare say that will be the best thing after all. A governess is such a convenient sort of person. You need never know that she is in the house."

"Oh, a governess; that's a new idea," said Thesiger reflectively. "I don't object to that so much. Since you think they have outgrown poor old Nurse Murdoch's intellectual powers, I dare say that is the best way out of the difficulty."

"Then I will look one out for you when I get home," said Lady Devereux, delighted that her advice was to be taken at last. "I will ask Angela Raymond if she knows of one that will do. She recommended my last two governesses to me, and they were most suitable. I sometimes wonder she doesn't go in for teaching herself, she is very poor, I know; but perhaps it is just as well she doesn't," added Gertrude Devereux, with a sidelong look at her brother.

"Angela Raymond? Oh, that's one of your protégées, isn't it? I think I remember hearing you speak of her. Why shouldn't she teach if she wants to?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Lady Devereux evasively. "She isn't at all the style of girl to—— dear me, Lyon, how chilly it has grown. Will you shut the window, please?"

Thesiger rose to obey her request, and forgot entirely to ask any more questions about Angela Raymond, which was precisely what his sister wished him to do.

Lady Devereux left the next day, and in a week's time Thesiger received the following note from her:

"DEAR LYON,—I have only time to write you a few lines, as Robert has telegraphed for me to join him in Paris, and I am leaving by the night mail. I did not forget about your governess, but I have not been able to find time to see her personally. I wrote to Angela about it as I told you I should. I haven't time to copy her postcard, so I send it you with this letter. I have hardly read it myself, but I see it is in Angela's most absurd style. What possessed her to write such stuff on a postcard I don't know. But the people she recommends are generally very suitable, so I should advise you to write to her and get Miss Kendall's address at once.—Yours in haste, "GERTRUDE DEVEREUX."

Thesiger read the letter through with his careless smile, and then opened the postcard, which was doubled in half. It ran thus:

"I know exactly the person to suit your brother—a Miss Kendall. She is well educated, extremely plain, and quite perfect in every way. Her eyes are a moral education in themselves. She gets up at four o'clock in the morning and sits in the corner of a damp meadow to see the sun rise. Cannot pass a leaf or a tree without classifying it. Is deeply impressed with the sacredness of childhood. Is hopelessly conscientious. Has trained scions of the aristocracy, and has rows of framed certificates. If you like the idea I'll send you her address. You might look out for something of the same kind for me. Things are beginning to pall on me here. I feel I should like to teach the young idea how to shoot, only I might end by shooting the young idea! "A. R."

The smile on Thesiger's face broadened.

"So that is the kind of person Gerty wants me to have for Patsy and Dolly," he said to himself. "Poor little mites! I don't want all their buoyancy taken out of them just yet. And so Gerty has stipulated that the governess is to be plain, has she?"

He laid the postcard down and went on with his breakfast, glancing at it from time to time. The handwriting was extremely small and clear.

"There's some originality about that girl, I should say," was the outcome of his meditations, "and if she will undertake my three pickles she shall. I'll write to her to-night."

And write he did. But he did not think

it necessary to communicate his intention of doing so to Lady Devereux.

Angela Raymond was alone when Mr. Thesiger's letter was brought to her. She opened it with some curiosity. When she had read it she laughed a little.

"So Lady Devereux sent on that postcard to him! I wonder what I put on it? I have completely forgotten."

She carried the letter in to her eldest sister, who had ruled the household with a rod of iron ever since her mother died.

"I think I shall take that," she said deliberately, throwing the paper across the table. "It will be a change, at any rate."

"I am sure it is quite time you did some work of some kind," returned Theodosia, with her most elderly air. "Papa was saying last night that he could not keep us all at home much longer."

"Then this has come in the nick of time," said Angela, yawning carelessly.

"It is a nice letter. What did you put on the postcard?" said Theodosia.

"I can't remember. It must have been very impressive, or the man wouldn't want me."

"You don't usually write impressive things," said Theodosia, with a glance at the rebellious dark eyes and curly black hair. "Your letters are generally a mass of nonsense."

"I suppose this Thesiger man likes nonsense, then."

"This Thesiger man! What a way of speaking!" said Theodosia reprovingly. "I do hope you will be careful when you are there, Angela."

Angela made a slight grimace, but said nothing, while Theodosia continued:

"You cannot be too circumspect in your behaviour under the circumstances, for I presume Mr. Thesiger is a widower."

"You have no idea how well I always behave with widowers," said Angela with her demurest air.

"I know how you behave with curates," said Theodosia sharply.

"Curates in general or Mr. Griggs in particular?"

"Both, I should say."

"But, my dearest Theodosia, these little curates are made to be flirted with. No one ever thinks of taking them seriously. When they grow into vicars it is another matter, but nice little curly-headed creatures with eighty pounds a year must be treated accordingly."

"It is quite time you left off this way of treating everything as a joke, Angela. You are twenty-five now, and ought to know better. I did imagine that your engagement would have steadied you a little, but I think it has made things worse."

"Well, it won't do that much longer, at any rate," said Angela serenely, "for I broke it off yesterday."

"Broke it off!" Theodosia nearly swallowed a mouthful of pins in her excitement, for she was engaged in pinning together a serge skirt for her youngest sister. "Whatever do you mean? You must be mad!"

"Not in the least. I explained matters quite clearly to Gerald, who was perfectly satisfied—at least, he said he was."

"And what reason did you give for breaking it off, pray?"

"Well," said Angela reflectively, "I told him quite frankly that I had begun to dislike him. You see, I thought I could marry him because I was so tired of everything here, and I wanted a change. But now I find I can't. He was all right as long as we were not engaged, but afterwards he became very foolish."

"You will never have such a chance again. I am surprised at you!"

"Oh, I don't know. He isn't such an awful catch. And that cast in his eye is enough to make any girl think twice. I never knew when he was looking at me, and it made me quite nervous. He ought to have four times the money he has to make up for the embarrassment he has made me suffer."

"You don't seem to think of what you are making him suffer!"

"Men don't suffer much nowadays," said Angela plaintively. "Gerald was more angry than hurt, I think. He is not in the least inconsolable, and never even spoke of suicide, although he had to cross the river on his way home, and the parapet is awfully low in one place. Times are not what they were! We parted fairly good friends. I advised him to marry Polly Evans. She has a slight tendency to squint too, you know; so I expect that would make things go right."

Theodosia stabbed the serge skirt with pins in a very vicious fashion. But she had long ago found out that to discuss things with Angela, as one might with a reasonable human being, was useless. She preserved a grim silence, therefore; but, like the parrot in the story, she thought the more.

"I am to go next week," said Angela,

referring to the letter, which she had picked up. "I wonder if I shall have time to make myself a new gown?"

"Governesses don't want elaborate clothes," said Theodosia.

"No; but I must positively have two changes of raiment—don't look so shocked, Theo, that's not in the least irreverent—and this gown is the only one I have fit to wear. I think I had better have a brown holland, only it always reminds me of a deserted London drawing-room done up after the season is over."

"You are not at all a suitable person for a governess," said Theodosia, frowning at her. "You will let the children do just as they like all day long, I know."

"It is just as well to try a new plan," said Angela, rising and going over to the window. "I was brought up very strictly myself, and you see how I have turned out."

Angela's arguments were sometimes unanswerable. Theodosia thought that this occasion was one of the many when she was too childish to be answered. She pitied the little Thesigers from the bottom of her heart.

"Do you intend to go on teaching all your life now that you have given up all idea of being married?" she asked of the pale grey back that stood in the window.

"I dare say I shall end in some Benevolent Home for Aged Governesses," answered Angela without turning round, "but I don't despair of being led to the altar just yet. I dare say it will be when I am white-haired and bent; but I expect I shall prefer it to the Governess's Home."

"Angela, do be careful how you talk to Mr. Thesiger!"

"I shall be as stiff as a ramrod, I assure you," returned Angela. "I shall speak when I am spoken to and not before. I shall blush whenever I meet him. I shall say 'Sir' to him when——"

"I know you will come home in a week's time," said Theodosia angrily.

"Oh, no, for the sake of the family I shall stay longer than that. Besides, I shall be such a treasure that Mr. Thesiger will never want to part with me."

"You have no patience with children, you know."

"Not with Sunday-school children, I admit. I hate to have them crawling over me, and hear them say in the middle of a lesson, 'Teacher, how much did yer give for the feather in yer 'at? Mother bought one jest like it the other day.'"

"You always pretend you like teaching when Mr. Griggs is anywhere about."

"My dear Theodosia, I dislike saying disagreeable things to anybody. You know what an angel I am about the house. And I like Mr. Griggs to think me a saint. What is the harm?"

Theodosia, reduced to silence once more, merely shook her head, and Angela went cheerfully out of the room. On her way across the hall, she saw, standing at the open door which led into the rose-covered porch, her late fiancé, Gerald Marsden. She went forward to greet him with her brightest smile.

"You are just in time for tea. How nice of you to come over and see us so soon!"

"I don't want any tea," said the discarded lover with some dignity, "and I only came to speak to you."

"Yes?" Angela leaned negligently against the wall and looked at him with black mischievous eyes "What do you want to say?"

"I can't talk here. Can't we go into the drawing-room?"

"Ted is playing the violin there. It jars on one's nerves a little, but we will go there if you like."

Marsden made an impatient movement.

"Theodosia is in the dining-room," added Angela sweetly.

"I suppose the garden, at least, is free from interruption?"

Angela took a shady hat which was hanging from a peg, ready for use, and stepped out into the sunlight in a most obliging manner.

"I came to know what you meant by all that nonsense yesterday?" said Gerald Marsden abruptly.

Angela gave a sidelong look at him, and decided that it was his left eye that was fixed so severely upon her. She gazed into it as she replied:

"What nonsense do you mean?"

"Why, your saying that you did not want to marry me."

"But that was the honest, sober truth. You are a delightful friend, my dear Gerald, but as a lover——!" She shook her curly head in a melancholy fashion.

"What is the matter with me? Do not I show you enough attention? Am I not affectionate enough?"

"Much—oh, much too affectionate!" cried Angela, in tones whose sincerity carried conviction with them. "That is just what I complain of."

"How can I help showing what I feel?"

"You can't, and that's why I've broken you off," explained Angela. "And I am not going to talk any more about it. When I have once made up my mind, days of talking won't alter it. I am going to be a governess."

"A pretty governess you will make!"

"Don't be rude. I am extremely well-educated, remember. I am going to teach the three children of Mr. Thesiger."

"Mr. Thesiger!" with pronounced emphasis on the first word of the sentence.

"Yes. Mr. Thesiger. He is a widower. There is no Mrs. Thesiger."

"It won't be long before there is one, then!" said Gerald Marsden, suddenly turning from her and walking out at the garden gate.

"How nice it is that Gerald still thinks me so irresistible!" said Angela to herself, as she watched his departing figure.

THE COLOUR OF THE SEA.

To the eye capable of distinguishing the finest shades of colour, the sea presents aspects of varied and ever-changing beauty. The myriad phases of the tints it assumes under every condition of light, atmosphere, and sky, in every part of the globe, whether far from land or close in-shore, and in every state of purity or impurity of its waters, make demands on the vocabulary of colour which can be adequately met only by a master of the art of word-painting. It is sufficient to refer to the passages so lavishly scattered throughout the sea stories of Mr. Clark Russell, in which he describes, with the passion of a lover and the art of a connoisseur, the marvellous colour harmonies arising from the play of light and wave.

A small quantity of pure sea-water placed in a glass appears entirely colourless, and as transparent as the clearest spring-water. A convenient method of observing the colour of larger quantities is to sink white objects in the sea, and note the tints they assume in the course of their descent. At first they appear greenish, then the green acquires a bluish tinge, and finally all colour disappears, and they are entirely lost to view in the depths. Another way is to pass a beam of sunlight through a long tube filled with sea-water and blackened inside to prevent subsidiary reflections. Such a beam is coloured a splendid blue-green by passing through the water, and the blue becomes purer as the depth of water increases. Blue is accordingly the natural colour of pure sea-water of great depth, and this is recognised in the sailors' expression "blue water," applied to the open ocean—the real deep sea.

In some deep seas the blue is intensified to a brilliant ultramarine, as in the Mediterranean, where this shade prevails not only in bright sunshine, but even with a slightly veiled sky, so that it is not merely the blue of the sky mirrored in the waters, but the peculiar colour of the sea itself.

It has been supposed that when the water is otherwise of normal purity, the depth of the blue depends upon its saltness. In salt-works the brine becomes of a deeper blue the longer evaporation is continued; and the deep azure of the Mediterranean, the Gulf Stream, and the ocean in the regions of the Trade Winds is attributed to the greater density of the water owing to the increased evaporation. In the Indian Ocean the colour is so intense that it has been poetically named the "Black Waters." It is doubtful, however, whether this is more than an unimportant factor in the production of the variety of ocean colours.

There is certainly not much difference between the fundamental colours of all the great oceans away from the land, but the concurrence of many observers in the general terms in which they describe each ocean appears to preclude the likelihood of these being mere variations of nomenclature, depending on the idiosyncrasies of travellers. The Polar Seas are generally described as having the ordinary blue colour of the deep sea, or marine blue, though extensive regions have a green tint. The hue of the equinoctial regions of the Atlantic is usually termed a vivid azure, and that of the Pacific a deep indigo blue. The term "celestial blue" seems of common consent to be reserved for the Mediterranean, and is for the most part accompanied by enthusiastic expressions of admiration of its splendour.

In all seas special and temporary variations of colouration are caused by reflection from the sky, according as it is clear or dark, and according to the height, distribution, and thickness of the clouds. The winds, too, have their effect. The azure of the Mediterranean with a clear sky and fine weather changes in tone when the sea is agitated, and, as the agitation increases, becomes darker and darker, while with bad weather and a completely overcast

sky its tint passes to a sombre green. The direction of the wind has also some influence on the particular shade assumed by the waters. In some cases the action of the wind imparts to the sea a perfectly livid aspect, and occasionally the greenish blue may turn to a brownish hue. When the sea is tossed into billows which are viewed in a suitable direction, a considerable quantity of light is transmitted to the eye by the crests of the waves, which act as prisms, and this transmitted light, which is always greenish in hue, is generally sufficient to add more or less green to the reflected blue. The most remarkable play of vivid colour occurs at sunset, when the surface is illumined with countless shades of purple and emerald. All these temporary phases of colour which are effected by the sun, clouds, and wind, are deceptive, as was long ago pointed out by Arago. Any particular portion of the deep sea is always in reality of the same colour, and by using a dark tube reaching close to the surface of the water, the lateral rays reaching the eye by reflection are cut off, and this permanent colour may be observed, whatever may be the position of the sun and clouds, or the state of the sky and the waves.

The darker or lighter pure blue of the deep sea almost always gives place to a more or less pronounced green on approaching the shore. This change usually begins to operate somewhere about fifteen miles from the shore, and shallow seas, or gulfs and arms of the sea, never attain the inky indigo hues of open ocean. As the depth diminishes the colour and nature of the bottom begin to show their influence. When the bottom consists of fine white sand, or—as is frequently the case in tropical regions—of white coral reefs, the water assumes an apple-green tinge, while yellow sand and coral produce a dark green tint. When the ground is largely composed of mud, the colour may become olive, blue-green, or greyish, and in such cases the agitation of a storm, by stirring up the sediment, causes a greenish-grey or brownish hue, according to the colour of the mud. The presence of dark rocks or ground is shown by a darkening of the prevailing shades. These local influences are decided, and constant in their effects on the colouration of shallow waters. Beautiful light effects are observed where a strongly reflecting bottom sends back the light to the eye through especially clear water, and similar effects have been obtained artificially in the Mediterranean by sinking, perpendicularly, a long blackened tube, provided with a mirror at the lower end, which reflects upwards through the tube the light passing through the water, producing blue colours of indescribable splendour. Such colour indications of shallow water are of importance to the mariner, who is warned of the presence of reefs, banks, or shoals.

The prevailing blue colour of the great body of the sea is a consequence of the physical laws which govern the absorption of light by different liquids. A liquid which appears purple by transmitted light does so by virtue of the power it possesses of selecting from the original white light falling on it, which is made up of all the colours of the solar spectrum, the yellow and the green, which it entirely absorbs, allowing free passage to the red and blue, which by this mixture produce purple. Similarly a blue liquid absorbs all the colours, with the exception of blue, while in this case, as well as in that of the purple, if the layers of liquid through which the light has to pass are sufficiently thick, all colour will disappear, and both appear black.

Of the three kinds of radiant energy of which the solar spectrum is composed—heat, light, and chemical—the invisible heat rays, which extend beyond the red end of the visible spectrum, are most energetically attacked by water, and do not penetrate beyond the surface layers, where their energy is expended in evaporating the water. The absorptive action of the water, as the solar rays penetrate further, causes a progressive enfeeblement of the entire spectrum, and the various colours are cut out successively, proceeding from the red, which first disappears, onwards through the orange, yellow, and green, blue persisting longest, and if the water is deep enough, the blue itself at last disappears, and with it the last vestige of light, so that the water appears as black as ink, though, as with ink itself, there may be a feeble light reflected from the surface. Hence the very dark tint of the usually pure water of the depths of mid-ocean. In the same way the purest ice, which is found under the moraines of glaciers, where it is most compact and free from air-bubbles, which elsewhere break up the light, absorbs light so completely that it appears of a pitchy blackness. As water vapour has the same selective power of absorbing light as water itself, the blue of distant hills is due to the water vapour present in the atmosphere,

and is darker as the proportion of water vapour increases.

The dark indigo tints of the ocean are intimately associated with the purity of its waters, and the presence of suspended matters modifies the colours in a marked degree. As the shore is approached the water contains more or less detritus, worn off the land by the incessant grinding of the sea itself, or carried down by rivers, and these impurities impart to the water varied shades of green, according to the proportion in which they are present. Professor Tyndall, during a voyage home from Algiers, examined the subject thoroughly, bottling samples of sea-water of all shades of colour, which he afterwards examined in his laboratory by the aid of a beam of light. Absolutely pure water, entirely free from matter in suspension, has no dispersive action on light, and the path of a ray sent through it is quite invisible, but the presence of impurities, even in infinitesimal quantity, is immediately manifested by the scattering of the light to which it gives rise, after the same principle on which the motes in a sunbeam show its path. Examination of the samples proved unmistakably that a most precise relation exists between the proportion of impurity present and the resulting tint of the water. Much suspended matter produces a greenish yellow, and with each diminution in the proportion of impurities the green becomes purer and more brilliant, while blue is always characterised by a marked increase in purity. It would, in fact, require very little trouble to produce a scheme of colour, according to which, by mere eye inspection, it would be possible to decide as to the purity of any particular part of the sea.

Professor Tyndall found that the action of suspended matter in affecting the colour of the water may be efficiently demonstrated by the simple expedient of sinking a white plate by a line. The colour of such an object is invariably green, but a green which deepens gradually as it sinks, and at the greatest depth at which it can be observed, even in water of the purest indigo blue, its hue never passes beyond blue-green, and it is easy to imagine that if such a plate were ground to powder, and diffused through the water, each individual particle would act in the same way.

The colours of pure ocean water, and the varying shades observed where impurities are met with, are still further diversified by the colouring effects of the enormous multitudes of various forms of organised life which sometimes mask the natural colour of the surface of the sea, and tinge extensive areas with remarkable colours. Red appears to be most frequently met with. In the southern parts of the Red Sea, and in the Arabian Gulf, large areas are coloured blood-red by microscopic animalcula, and in the Indian Ocean similar forms of life cause, in addition to red, milk-white or yellow spots of great extent, the appearance of which is frequently alarming to the ignorant sailor. Off the Guinea coast ships sometimes appear to float in milk. Extensive red streaks are also known to occur in the South Atlantic and South Pacific, which are caused by hosts of small red crustacea. The "Vermilion Sea" off California owes its brilliant colour to infusoria. Areas coloured green have been noted, especially in the Arctic regions, which are due to myriads of diatoms, and in some portions of the Antarctic seas diatoms of rusty colour make the water a dirty brown.

Other forms of life are capable, in special circumstances, of altering the appearance of considerable portions of the surface of the sea. The most beautiful and remarkable of all these phenomena is the phosphorescence of the sea, which is sometimes noticed on a small scale off our own coasts, and is scarcely ever absent from tropical waters, where it affords a spectacle by night the weird beauty of which baffles description. Small medusæ are the principal instruments in its production, and ascidians, crustacea, and, in fact, most pelagic animals, assist in some degree.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "The Thirteenth Brydain," "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Benoît of Clergy," "The Vicar's Aunt," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

"Oh, Jim! say it's all right. Say you think she will do! Say I've not made any mistake!"

Once more Dr. Meredith and his assistant were standing outside Rose Swinton's door. But it was eight o'clock on the following morning, and twenty-four hours since they had arrived together in the rain.

"Yes, I do say it!" he said in a voice which, though necessarily low, was excited almost to elation. "Indeed, she will do; if nothing utterly unforeseen happens she will do admirably. It's all your doing, Thea, all! I don't know how to thank you!"

The two were quite alone. Old Mr. Swinton, who had been up all night, wandering restlessly and miserably from room to room, had fallen towards morning into a heavy sleep, from which no one had waked him yet, even to hear good news.

For there was good news to hear. Throughout all the night Dr. Godfrey and the nurse had watched Rose Swinton together, fully believing that each hour as it broke must be the one to see the end.

The nurse had so completely given up hope that she would have been almost ready to give up endeavour, too, if it had not been for Dr. Godfrey. Althea shared her hopelessness to its fullest extent; but there seemed to be in her an indomitable spring of intense determination to win the fight if by any remote chance it might be possible, and whatever happened, to fight desperately to the very last. And when, just before the early summer dawn began to break, they were both uncertain for a moment whether the change that rapidly showed itself on the almost unrecognisably fevered features, was or was not the beginning of the very last change, Althea still insisted on persevering with the treatment she had steadily used without intermission all night long; persevered in spite of its apparent utter uselessness.

Half an hour later the two looked at one another in silent amaze. The change had come indeed, but it was a change to life, and not to death. And from that hour to half-past seven, when Dr. Meredith's wheels were heard, Althea had sat, motionless, watching the girlish figure sleeping the sleep which was to bring it life. She had brought Dr. Meredith in, and now, at eight o'clock, she had come out again with him to ask him the question that her trembling lips had hardly found themselves able to put into words.

As Dr. Meredith spoke his last words, she turned round to him suddenly and caught at his arm.

"Jim!" she said faintly. "Jim! Will you take me home? I'm so tired. It's very silly, but I'm very tired."

Dr. Meredith looked at her face and then drew her arm firmly into his own, took her downstairs quickly, put her straight into the waiting dogcart, and tucked the rug carefully round her.

"You'll be best in the air, I think," he said, with a careful solicitude in his tone. He went on to explain that he would only keep her waiting while he went back into the house to leave a message for Mr. Swinton as to his own return.

Three minutes sufficed to accomplish this; at the end of that brief interval Dr. Meredith reappeared, and jumped into his place beside Althea. He gave a scrutinising glance at her before he gathered up the reins.

"Better?" he said tersely.

She made a little acquiescent movement, but she did not speak. She leaned wearily back against the rail of the seat, with her eyes fixed on the sky in front of them. Her face was almost ashen now in its pallor, and it looked utterly weary. The past night had deepened the heavy shadows under her eyes into great hollows. Her mouth had suddenly lost its determined set, and there was a droop about the corners rather like that of a worn-out, tired child's mouth. All the lines about her had relaxed into a heavy lassitude, that seemed to intensify the haggardness by the very completeness of the relaxation. In her eyes alone was there any trace of the determined spirit which had shown itself through the last day and night. Hollow though they were, in their grey depths was her own steadfast resolution; a resolution which seemed to increase as they drove along.

Dr. Meredith did not break the silence she had tacitly imposed. Something in that little gesture of hers had seemed to hold him in check; he had given her one more searching look after that, and then had seemed to concentrate his whole attention in getting his horse along as quickly as possible, and in that he succeeded. In an unusually short space of time the dogcart pulled up at Dr. Meredith's own house.

He jumped down quickly, and stood waiting for her to descend. She rose slowly, and before she put her foot on the step she stretched out her own hand and caught at the firm one which was ready to help her.

"Go in!" he said tersely. "Go straight into my room. I'm coming directly I've found William."

He looked and spoke as if he expected some opposition to his directions, but Althea made none. Without a word she turned, and went up Mrs. French's spotless doorsteps into the house. She met no one. Mrs. French was breakfasting placidly in the back premises. She pushed open the sitting-room door with a weary gesture, and let herself fall heavily into the nearest chair.

Scarcely time enough had elapsed even

for this when Dr. Meredith's step came very rapidly along the stone-flagged passage from the back of the house. He came hurriedly in, went straight to the end of the room, and returned with some brandy in a glass.

"Drink it!" he said forcibly, as Althea lifted her white face with a look that meant refusal.

Althea took the tumbler in her hand, and tried to obey. But it took her some time, and it was with a very cold and shaking hand that she gave Dr. Meredith back the glass.

"Come here," he said, taking her gently and firmly by the arm, "I'm going to light the fire, and you're going to have some breakfast."

She submitted to being led across the room to the easy-chair, half mechanically. But against the rest of his speech she protested.

"I don't want anything, thank you, Jim, and I'm not cold," she said in a weary, far-away voice, which was accompanied by an evidently involuntary shiver. "I only want to speak to you."

"Possibly I want to speak to you," he said, as he calmly proceeded to carry out the first of his intentions by striking a match. "But neither you nor I say anything until you've had something."

Either the masterful tone or her own weariness subdued Althea's resolution. She said no more, only leaned back in her chair. And when he brought her some of the breakfast that stood waiting on the table, she took it with much the same mechanical meekness with which she had let him put her into the arm-chair.

Her face was a trifle less ashen when, a quarter of an hour later, she set her cup and plate down on the table with a quick gesture.

"Now, Jim!" she said, "now you must listen to me."

In her eyes the determination that had burned in them during their drive home had deepened until it had grown into an intense light.

"I'm sorry to have behaved like a perfect idiot," she said heavily, "and I'm very sorry to waste any more of your time. No, don't," as he prepared to interrupt her. "I don't know what you want to say; but I must speak to you first. What I have to say to you is this."

She passed her hand over her forehead with a weary movement. With the gesture all the haggard relaxation in her face seemed to increase, or to become more obvious. It was weary beyond words; there was a heavy indifference about it, that witnessed not to carelessness, but to a sort of hopeless and complete surrender of herself.

Dr. Meredith looked at her, and a great bewilderment came over his face; but he waited patiently for her to speak. He had risen and was standing, with one elbow on the mantelshelf, facing her and looking down at her. She was sitting in the chair where he had placed her; she had drawn herself, by the help, it seemed, of a hand on each arm, and was looking up at him.

"I wanted to tell you, Jim," she said slowly, "that I am going away — on Thursday."

Dr. Meredith drew his elbow away from the mantelpiece as swiftly as if something there had injured him.

"Thursday!" he repeated sharply. "Going away on Thursday! What do you mean?"

"Going away on Thursday." She reiterated the words very slowly indeed. "Haven't I said it clearly?"

Dr. Meredith replaced his elbow on the mantelpiece as if some material support were necessary to his frame of mind; and he said nothing. He had absolutely nothing to say, and no words to express the extremely irreconcilable feelings that rushed through his brain; they were all united and then disunited, for the time being, by one cloud of heavy amazement. In the midst of it he was conscious of a dull sense of surprise at himself for being so confusedly incapable of greeting the key to the situation that had so long baffled him.

"Don't mind saying that you are glad," she went on, in a heavy voice that seemed to come from something much farther away than that slight figure in the arm-chair. "For, of course, you must be; and also, of course, I understand, Jim. I have understood for quite a long time now."

Her hands were grasping the arms of the chair very tightly, and the grasp seemed to be a material evidence to her of the grasp in which she was plainly holding herself. But it was not so much a grasp which had for its object the keeping of herself in control as one with which she was dragging her whole self through an indescribable effort.

"You must have an assistant, of course," she went on. "You see, Jim, I've been here now, and I know by experience how much too much the work is for one. I

wouldn't like to think you were overworking yourself again. And, indeed, the practice must be made to stand it, or—or something must be done. You will be sure and see about it at once, won't you, Jim?"

There was a little anxious, appealing tone in her last words, and the light in her eyes softened as she looked at him.

"Assistants are not difficult to find," she added, with a faint smile; "and you'll quite easily get one who will be much more help to you than I've ever been."

She stopped, and there was a silence. The only sound in the room was the creaking sound made by the now dying little bit of fire that Dr. Meredith had lighted.

It was he who broke the silence. Stretching his arm along the mantelpiece, he began to play restlessly with the end of a little ornamental pipe-rack.

"Althea," he said. Dr. Meredith very seldom used Althea's full name thus, and it lent a certain formality to his beginning; but his tone was very gentle, and his eyes as they looked down on her were full of consideration and tenderness. "I can't tell you," he went on, "how thankful I am to hear what you say! I might have known that a woman of your sense could not fail sooner or later to see things in their right light. I might have been sure you would understand it. I blame myself very much for the impatience I have shown in the matter. I think you would be glad if you could know, though, what a weight you have taken off my mind by your words!"

If Althea's ashen face could have grown a shade paler it did so; and the hands that held so fast to the arms of the chair were very cold. She looked up at him as he ended with a rather wistful look creeping into her eyes, and softening the drooping corners of her mouth.

"Jim," she said, "I wish you would tell me—I should be so glad to think that though I have made such an awful mess of it all—and you can't think how well I know that I have made an awful mess and mistake—still, I should so like to think I had been some little use to you—I'd helped you a little, if it was ever so little. I should like to have it to remember, if I could."

There was something wistful in her voice, too, and the last words were spoken very tentatively and humbly. Dr. Meredith made a sudden movement that nearly jerked pipes, pipe-rack, and all off the mantelpiece.

"Helped me?" he said. "Why, of course you have! You know you have. You've taken half the work on your shoulders! And you needn't think that any one else will do it so well, because they won't! What I should have done, where I should have been without you, Thea, these last two days, to say nothing of anything else——"

A curious kind of spasm passed across Althea's face, and she interrupted him quickly.

"Don't!" she said. "I didn't want you to say that. You know I'm very glad if I could—if I was—any help."

Again she stopped, and again there was a pause. Dr. Meredith was silent, the tender consideration of which his face was full seeming to make it difficult to him to find words. It was Althea who spoke at last.

"I don't know quite how to make it clear," she said, "and I do so want it to be clear. I want you to understand this, Jim."

There was a quite different tone in her voice. It was steady and very dignified. There was no trace of hesitation or doubtfulness about it.

"I don't blame you or reproach you in the very least," she went on. "I never shall blame you. I shall know always—I know now—that it was all my fault. I said that Sunday that it was your doing; but now I know it was mine, and I choose it to be mine, and you are absolutely free, Jim—as free as if we had never seen each other."

Dr. Meredith gave a little start, and a shadow of troubled perplexity flitted across his face.

"Free, Thea?" he said. "That Sunday? That Sunday is nothing, nothing at all! I behaved like a brute, I know that. But if you could make some allowance for the fact that I was most tremendously taken aback, and if you could forgive me——"

He stopped abruptly, his eyes fixed on the white, set face she had slowly lifted to him.

"Thea!" he exclaimed, "you're not going to hold to what we said that day; you're not thinking of that?"

"Yes!" she said steadily. "Yes, of course I am. How can you ask it?"

"But, Thea!" he cried, with a great consternation dawning in his eyes. "Surely you know I wasn't in earnest! Surely

you know I didn't mean it! Thea, Thea, what have I done!"

He took two swift strides towards her, but she motioned him back with a quick little gesture.

"You've done nothing," she said. "It's all perfectly natural. You are very generous, Jim, and honourable, and I know you don't like the thought of going back from your word. But I go back from mine! Don't you understand? It's I who go back from mine!"

The shadow of perplexity on Dr. Meredith's face developed into a black look of utter bewilderment and dismay.

"But why, Thea?" he cried. "Why?"

"Why?" she repeated. "Don't you understand? Perhaps I'd better tell you, then; but, Jim, I didn't think you would have made me say it. Don't you see, I know—I have known for ever so long—that there's some one else you care for more than you care for me."

The bewilderment and dismay developed into a look of alarmed and hopeless incomprehension.

"Some one else?" he said slowly, in a dull, blank voice. "What can you mean, Thea? Some one else! But who?"

Quite suddenly—so suddenly that Dr. Meredith started—Althea rose from the chair in which she had been sitting all this time—rose with a swift, impetuous gesture, and stood facing him. Her white, set face was all changed and working with intense emotion; her grey eyes were flashing, and her lips trembling with passionate excitement.

"Who!" she said. "Who! Who should it be, Jim, but Rose Swinton? Hasn't your whole mind dwelt on her incessantly? Hasn't she been your one thought for days? Haven't you been ready to sacrifice anything and everything if only she might live? Do you think I'm blind, Jim, or a fool?" she put in in scornful parenthesis.

Dr. Meredith was gazing at her with wide, amazed eyes and a pale face.

"Thea!" he said rather faintly, as she paused for breath. "Thea——"

But Althea took not the least heed to his faltering words. Presumably she did not even hear them.

"Isn't it obvious," she went on excitedly, "obvious to every one—not only to me—how you care for her? Every one in Mary Combe will tell you the same thing. Every one looks upon your attention to her, and your anxiety about her, as the natural thing. Every one knows! Every one understands! It was only I who was in the dark. But I understand too, now!"

Thus far she had not moved; but as she spoke the last words, she leaned her hand on the mantelshelf, evidently for some sort of support, and her manner changed abruptly. It was not excited, but it was defiant—a defiance that showed itself in the gesture with which she stopped Dr. Meredith when he tried again to speak.

"No, Jim!" she said. "Hear me out first. I'm going back to that Sunday. I thought then, as you yourself said just now, that it was, well—nothing. I thought it would be all right. And——" she broke off and stopped for an instant, "though I wasn't very happy, Jim," she said rather falteringly, "I went on thinking so until the day when you first asked me to go to Stoke Vere for you. I don't quite know what suggested all the truth to me then; your manner, I think, and the fact that you had never spoken of her to me—naturally enough, I see now!"

She stopped, breathless.

"If you would listen to me; if you'd only listen for one moment," cried Dr. Meredith. "Thea, I could explain it—everything!"

"Wait!" was all she said.

And Dr. Meredith, his eyes fixed in a sort of horror on her face, his own growing paler and paler, had no choice but to obey.

"Then, when I saw her, it grew clearer, of course. And it has scarcely needed your intense anxiety about her now to make me understand what is absolutely natural and simple. Oh, yes!" she repeated bitterly, "quite simple. When I was mad enough to come here, to try and help you, you hated me for my mad freak—I see that now; and it was quite reasonable that you should. And perfectly reasonable that you should turn to some one else; some one who would be more congenial to you than I—who would never distress you by such—by such unwomanly ways. Oh!"

She broke off with a sort of cry and glanced down at her dress, while a burning colour dyed her neck and the very roots of her hair.

"I detest myself! I detest myself!"

Dr. Meredith caught at her outstretched arm with a sudden, imploring gesture, but she shook his hand off as if it burnt her.

"There's some more," she said slowly. "I'll tell you it all, but it's difficult to have to make you hate me more than you do already."

She paused, and then went on still more slowly, and with hesitating breaks between her words.

"You know now," she said, "that it hasn't been easy for me to—to help you with—her. And, last night, last night, when—she—was at the lowest of all, it flashed into my mind that I'd only got to let her go and it would all be over, and she could never take my place. But, Jim, I didn't act upon it."

She lifted her eyes as she spoke to his face, now nearly as white as her own.

"I didn't begin to act upon it! But I did think of it; and you ought to know it. That's all, I think," she added heavily. "Mind, I shall never, never blame you. It is all my own doing; but if you could forgive me for coming here I should be grateful. That's all."

She took her hand from the mantelpiece and turned as if to move away. But a heavy, tremulous hand fell on her shoulder, and a strong grip turned her back.

"Thea!"

Dr. Meredith's voice was hoarse and choked with agitation.

"Thea, it is my turn now, and before I say anything else, I swear to you that I love no other woman in this world but you; and that I love you at this moment more than I ever did before."

He broke off, and his hold on her shoulder tightened convulsively.

Althea suddenly raised her miserable grey eyes to his. They grew larger and wider, wildly, and great irregular dashes of colour showed spasmodically on her white face.

"Jim!" she said in a far-away, weak voice; "Jim! You mean that you——"

"I don't know how to put it most strongly, Thea, but you have made the greatest mistake you ever made in your life. I have never given—I swear it to you on my honour—one single thought to Rose Swinton—to any one but you."

"Jim! you don't—you don't love me still?"

The words were very brokenly spoken, and then, without waiting for an answer, Althea wrenched herself from his grasp, buried her face on his shoulder, and broke into convulsive, choking sobs.

Dr. Meredith looked down on the slight shaking shoulders with his own face working oddly. But he did not speak; and, indeed, it would not have been of much use. The revulsion of feeling and the strain she had just passed through were too much for Althea, and she sobbed absolutely uncontrollably. Dr. Meredith waited patiently, and with a great tenderness on his face, until the first break came, and Althea drew a long, weary breath. Then he said, very gently:

"Thea, if you could, I wish you would let me tell you how I hate myself for having been a fool and a brute. I must have been so inconceivably stupid to have given you the slightest foundation for such an awful mistake. But I never dreamed of such a thing—never! I was just simply very anxious, for my own credit's sake, and for her poor old father's, to pull Rose Swinton through, and I thought—well, I took for granted that you would understand, and would help me. I was a hopeless idiot!"

There was a quick catch in Althea's breath.

"No, you were not!" came in a low, smothered voice from her.

"Yes, I was," he responded quickly. "Perhaps if I'd been clearer-headed I should have understood it all, and understood you quicker. But, Thea"—he paused for one moment, and then went on in a rather lower tone—"if you've been unhappy, I haven't been very happy either. I haven't enjoyed the terms we've been on; is it likely? And I didn't know what on earth to do to alter things. I've been horribly distressed and perplexed. Perhaps," he said appealingly, "if you think of that, you could forgive me for all the misery I've brought to you."

He paused. Althea very slowly lifted her head from its resting-place, and lifted, with an evident effort, her heavy eyes to him, only to let them fall again directly.

"Can you forgive me for coming here, Jim? For all the unhappiness I've been to you?"

The sobs had not yet gone out of Althea's voice, and her imploring little speech was more than once broken by them.

Dr. Meredith raised her tear-stained face very tenderly, and turned it to his own, which was full of grave and yet passionate feeling.

"Thea," he said slowly, "Thea, my darling, though we've both been so unhappy, I wouldn't have missed this month out of our experience for anything. We shall know each other better all our lives for it, and I shall, if I can," he added, "love you better than I did for having had you for my assistant."

A week later Lady Carruthers received a

letter from her niece dated from the house in Bloomsbury. This was somewhat of a surprise to her, for as she had lately told several friends, quoting in so doing Althea's own description of her whereabouts, she had believed her niece to be staying "somewhere in the country with a friend."

The letter was in itself an unusual occurrence, for the aunt and niece never corresponded; and its contents were of a nature calculated rather to impress the occurrence upon the recipient.

"Dr. Meredith," so the letter ran, "has decided to sell his practice in the country as soon as possible, and to take one close to London. If this arrangement should be carried out, we hope to be married early in the autumn."

On this Lady Carruthers rose in her dignity, and issued something between a mandate and an invitation to her niece to come to her for at least three months previous to her wedding, that her clothes might be "seen after sensibly." And Althea obeyed with a most unwonted meekness—a meekness which characterised her throughout the whole of the three months. Towards the end of the time it had grown so marked, indeed, as to evoke a most unusual course of comment from Lady Carruthers.

"Really, Althea," she said one September day, when the aunt and niece were driving home along Piccadilly after one of the last of their shopping expeditions; "really, I may say that it is a great satisfaction to me to feel that your engagement has been so unexceptionably carried through. I cannot say how thankful I am that your own conduct has been throughout so commendable, and never once characterised by any of that terrible unconventionality which is, or, I should say, was, your marked trait. It would have been so like you, you know, to have conducted yourself in some ridiculously unheard-of way or other! But I see that, thanks to my very careful upbringing, you have not forgotten what is due to me and yourself."

A vivid blush suffused Althea's cheek. Lady Carruthers took it, and the rather confused disclaimer that followed it, for modesty.

Fortunately for her, the mental picture that was at that moment blotting out the trees in the Green Park from Althea's eyes, and making them at the same time sparkle with covert, half-regretful humour, was for ever undreamed of by Lady Carruthers, as it would be for ever by all Althea's world beside, save her husband. Althea saw herself buying in the Mary Combe shop a large offering of sweets to assuage the grief that had been evinced by Thomas Benjamin Allen, and a group of his friends, at her departure from Mary Combe as Dr. Meredith's assistant.

Now Publishing,

THE

EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER

CONTAINING

Complete Stories by Popular Writers.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.

Next Month will be published the OPENING CHAPTERS of

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS,

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc. etc.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 290.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVII. LED INTO TEMPTATION.

"WELL, really it is most sad and most extraordinary," said Mrs. Bethune to Adela. "Philip Gillbanks has come from that wild black country only to be lost in a fog. How very strange! Here is the account of it in the 'Morning Post.' It has quite upset Dora, she isn't the same girl, and as to dear Forster, he ought not to go back. It is fortunate that he is obliged to stay in bed with a return of that fever, for I really believe he would already have gone back to those poor Winskells. There was always something odd about that marriage, wasn't there? And this end seems even stranger. I mean, of course, it is natural, but one does wish it was more like an ordinary bereavement."

"Oh, mother! It is dreadful; but Dora won't be comforted at all. I wish she had never gone, it weighs on her mind. Mr. De Lucy looks quite puzzled because Dora has not once contradicted him! He is really very sympathetic, and I notice he won't mention anything which reminds Dora of it. As to Forster, he was so well, Dora says, before this happened."

"When people take such odd titles you can't expect them to have things happen to them quite in the same way as ordinary mortals."

"I wish we had never met them, if this is to be the result. I hardly dare go into Forster's room, he always asks if there is a letter for him, and Dora won't say a word about it all."

"It's very extraordinary! A mysterious disappearance never seems quite proper, does it?"

"No, people will think poor Philip has been murdered, or decoyed away, or I don't know what else! It is quite wonderful what stories fly round from extremely ordinary misfortunes."

"They all think he fell into the Rothery," sighed Mrs. Bethune. "I'm sure it sounds quite natural; just what I should do in a fog, and I dare say on a clear day too, dear. What a comfort Dora has come back safe and sound. I have got a drawer full of letters for her to sort, but she seemed so unlike herself that I haven't shown them to her. She says the house—the Palace, those strange people call it—is beautiful now, all except one turret which the King—my dear, isn't it comical, all these names? Well, the old man, who is quite crazy, it appears, won't have his burrow touched, so it remains in a decayed condition."

"But the oddest part of the story is his finding the hidden treasure. I never thought such things existed outside boys' books, did you, mother?"

"It isn't common, but nothing about our beautiful Princess was common. Imagine her a widow, poor thing, poor thing! The Rookwoods will want to hear all about everything. I'm glad they are coming to-day, though poor Forster looked quite pained when I told him. He does not want to see anybody. He was so very fond of his poor dear friend, wasn't he?"

"Philip Gillbanks was the nicest man I have ever met," said Adela suddenly.

"Except Forster, dear Adela, you forget."

"Of course, but Forster was so much accustomed to being master and ordering

people, that he hardly knew how wonderful his friend was. It isn't so very easy to be always obeying."

"Oh, but dear Forster takes the lead better than any one else."

"Then I'm sure Philip Gillbanks took the other position better than any one else I know."

"Till he married! He was quite infatuated about our Princess, and she seemed so little fitted to be the wife of a—an ordinary man."

"There's Jack!" exclaimed Adela, "and where is Dora? She must leave off moping."

To Dora the whole household seemed so bright and cheerful, that she felt all the more deeply the contrast to that other home. The secret, which in spite of herself she had discovered, weighed her down and seemed to darken even the sunshine, but it could not dim the atmosphere of truth and goodness that pervaded her own home. She could not, however, shake off the misery of it, nor could she feel that she would ever be the same happy Dora as of old.

Her life was changed by one touch of the wand of evil. To her young imagination there was no difference in the degrees of evil. She interpreted the Gospel words literally, so to her this unholy love, this sin, meant an angel's fall.

And all this knowledge Dora must keep to herself! For Forster's sake she must neither speak to him of it nor to any one else, and she must live her daily life without seeming to know it.

She, too, heard the Rookwoods drive up to the door, and she made an effort to go down to meet them.

They were already in the drawing-room, and Lady Rookwood was deep in conversation.

"Oh, yes, we heard it in town. It is in all the society papers. You see, the wedding of your strange Princess surprised a good many persons. Oh! here is Dora. Why, you must know all about it."

"How did it happen?" said Lord Rookwood. "To be lost in a fog seems odd. He was not going on a long journey, was he?"

"I only know it's true," said Dora.

"Yes, but the fellow wasn't a fool. Was there no trace found anywhere?"

"Please don't ask anything more about it, Cousin Jack. It was all so—so dreadful," said Dora.

Lord Rookwood at once turned the conversation, and then he soon suggested going upstairs to see Forster.

"That fever is a beastly thing. I told Forster he would repent going off on such a fool's errand. That settlement will prove more than he bargained for."

"I wish you would persuade him that he's done enough for other people," chimed in Mrs. Bethune; "he really might try and get some employment at home. It is so hard to explain Forster's work when people ask what my son is doing."

"Poor aunt! In future you must say that he is a fashionable philanthropist."

"Forster would indeed be shocked! You know he hates fashions. But do come and see him; he's better to-day, only the doctor won't let him go out of his room. It is that anxiety that brought the fever back, and that long journey home. He thought it was all so bad for Dora—so it was."

This last sentence was said in the passage as Mrs. Bethune led the way upstairs.

"I met some friends of the Princess yesterday. They are much excited about the news of her widowhood. They take a great interest in a rich widow."

"Jack, dear, how shocking! It is only such a short time since that poor Philip was lost. How can people say such things? Poor dears, I don't suppose they mean it, but they shouldn't, they really shouldn't. How angry Forster would be if he knew it! Don't say anything like that to him."

"Don't be afraid, aunt, I've only come about the settlement, which means that I pay up for Forster's little amusements in Africa."

"Do be thankful that you can help the poor dear people! I wish I could, but Forster says you are the proper person to squeeze."

"Does he? Well, he won't do much more in that line. It only ruins his own health, and brings that nice fellow home to lose his wits in a fog."

Forster was sitting by a fire, though at Bethune Castle the late September sun was still warm, and there was no such chilliness as that experienced in the Rothery valley during even the summer months of the year. Forster's handsome face was so strangely altered, that on seeing him Lord Rookwood exclaimed:

"Good heavens, Forster! What have you done to yourself?"

"Yes, dear boy, he has ruined his health for all kinds of poor dear people."

"Nonsense, mother. I say, Jack, don't bother about me."

Mrs. Bethune went out and left them alone.

"What's all this strange business about Philip?" said Lord Rookwood, sitting down and looking at Forster with undisguised astonishment. "It's been a—a blow to you, I see. Aunt said you had got all right again of that African fever, but you look anything but all right."

"No, I'm all wrong, everything is wrong, Jack. I—I wish I had never come back, and then Philip would have stayed there too."

"It is no use going back on things like that. It's too complicated; besides, if he was to—to be lost in a fog, a fog would have come on out there, if there are such things."

"No, such things are not all mapped out like that, independently of one's actions. I was a base coward to forsake the post. I say, Jack, I owe you no end of—of apologies. You gave us the money, and I wasn't fit to use it."

"Oh! I say, if you are in a penitent mood for nothing, I shall have to stump up some more tin, and I really didn't mean to. Hang the tin! You know I've got lots, and if you want me to go bankrupt for the Rookery, why, I must." Jack tried to laugh. "And look here, look at this report of a fellow who went to the settlement."

He drew out a newspaper cutting from an inner pocket. It gave a glowing description of the colony, comparing it favourably with all the other undertakings of the same kind, but it added: "The result of this is owing to the personal efforts and extraordinary exertions of that leader among men, Forster Bethune, cousin of the noble lord whose generous gift of money has made the enterprise possible."

"That ought to cheer you, Forster! You really made it go on all fours, and you should hear how people plague me with congratulations, and treat me like a modern philanthropic Juggernaut. I daren't say that I had it all taken from me at the bayonet point by your silver tongue."

"But, Jack, it wasn't you nor I, it was Philip that made it a success. I shall never forget all that he did. I went out with half a heart, and he was so afraid that people should say I had failed, that he put his whole being, his whole heart into the work, and made it what it is."

"But what the deuce does he mean by coming home and disappearing in this idiotic fashion?"

"Mean! Oh, it is the judgement of Heaven on me," and Forster groaned.

"Oh, nonsense; that is a good phrase, you know, for your East Enders, but it doesn't go down in society! What had you to do with it?"

"I—I—I don't know, but I can never forgive myself. I saw him—and I did not follow him or warn him of that dangerous river bank and——"

Forster was putting a strong curb over his inclination to make Jack his confessor. For everybody's sake, for the sake of Philip's memory, it was especially important that the truth should never leak out.

"Well, you saw him in that glen. It was foggy and he never came home again. Htimph! But his body has not been found."

"No, and it may never be recovered. Those rivers pierce the rocky bed at times and run underground, or else flow through such deep, narrow channels that it is impossible to follow their course."

"It seems odd! By the way, Forster, there is no suspicion of treachery, I suppose?"

Forster started from his chair.

"Treachery! What makes you think so?"

"Nothing, of course. I don't know the place or the people, but you once said Philip would never be well received up there."

"But he was her husband, legally married, you know."

"I never supposed it otherwise."

"But his money rebuilt the whole place, it saved the family from ruin."

"Her royal highness was——"

"Hush, Jack, let us respect Philip's memory. I am going back there as soon as possible; as long as his body is not found there may be hope—but I have none. I know Philip is dead, and—and I shall never forgive myself."

"You are wretchedly weak. You and Dora seem quite changed creatures."

"Dora—poor child!"

"Blue devils have possession of you, but I mean to drive them out. I'm so awfully matter-of-fact, and to say the truth I'm a being living on such utterly false pretences, that I want to perform some good work to compensate for the feeling."

"False pretences! Not you, Jack! If you don't mind getting rid of your good opinion of me, I shall feel better."

"But I can't! Hulloa! here's Dora. I'll go and see uncle. I've brought him a rare edition of something. Her ladyship looked into it; I didn't. She pretends to be literary. We all of us live on pretence, you see."

"Yes."

Then Dora entered and shut the door. She came towards the fireplace, and knelt down by her brother. The look of dejection in one formerly so light-hearted was pitiful to see.

Suddenly Forster's face flushed, for Dora drew a letter out of her pocket.

"Forster—this has come for you." It was addressed in Penelope's handwriting. Dora misunderstood the flush, for her secret weighed heavily on her.

"Forster, Forster, don't read it. It is from Penelope."

"Not read it! It may be about——"

"Oh, no, no; he is dead. I know he is. Don't let Philip see—people do see those they love when they are dead, I am sure they do. Don't let him see that."

"See what?" said Forster hoarsely. The girl's words were like sharp-edged knives.

"You know—you know. Don't let him see how much you and Penzie love each other."

Dora herself looked like the culprit, as she hid her face in the arm-chair.

"Dora, how can you?"

"I know I ought not to say it. The Princess said for your sake I must not, but I love you so much—oh, so much. You know that you have been my hero ever since I was a baby. I know I don't understand such things, only it is wrong, it must be wrong."

"You need not fear, Dora. My life must be lived on other lines."

He broke open the seal and read the one line the letter contained:

"Come at once if you can."

He showed it in silence to Dora.

"Oh, don't go—don't go, Forster. It is an evil place; don't go. What does 'Lead us not into temptation' mean? Don't go."

"Hush, little Dora; I must go."

CHAPTER XLVIII. DESOLATE DAYS.

Sometimes it happens that, in the north, winter steps into the month of October and places her chilly feet on summer's last carpet of flowers, making the blossoms shiver at her cold touch.

In the Rothery valley there had come this sudden spell of winter weather.

Often and often had the King of Rothery, with his son and Oldcorn, spent nights in wandering on the fells; but now the old man's life seemed more than ever paralysed, and more than ever his strange madness increased. Money had been his mania all his life, and now that he had conveyed the treasure to his room at the old farm, he watched it as a dog guards his favourite bone.

Even Oldcorn, with well-seasoned nerves, now felt a strange creepiness when he noted the expression of his master's face; for the old man would sit for hours in a kind of torpid contemplation of his treasure, then, if roused, he would fly into a terrible passion which made one's blood run cold. He seemed to be returning slowly towards the type of the brute creation from whence, as we are told, man has originally sprung, and this was shown more especially in his night wanderings.

Since Philip's disappearance no one except Oldcorn had paid great attention to him. Penelope experienced a strange horror of her father's presence, and the Duke was so taken up with business that only once or twice had he tried to persuade his brother to give up his treasure. He had been able to assure himself that it was no mare's nest—the treasure was a fact, and needed to be judiciously dealt with—but the blow which had fallen on the Palace had swallowed up all other matters.

Everything that could be done had been done, but in vain, and now no one entertained a hope that Penelope's husband was still alive. Only two persons, however, knew the probable cause of his disappearance, and the lips of those two were sealed. To others it appeared that Philip had been lost in the fog, that he had accidentally missed his footing and that the cruel Rothery had swept him away into the bowels of the earth; but for those two, Philip, in deep anguish, had rushed away from the treachery of a friend and the coldness of a woman, and blinded by despair, had flung prudence to the winds. The sadness had been increased tenfold by the arrival of Mr. Gillbanks and his daughter Clytie.

In one thing Penelope was firm. She would not see them, she shut herself up in her room, and refused to come out or to let the visitors see her. The Duke accounted for it by the fact of her grief; she was utterly changed, he said, and said truly, as he begged the two to respect her wishes; for the terrible shock and the long uncertainty she had endured had quite unnerved her.

The Palace seemed to the busy merchant a place of the dead. His grief for his son was deep but silent. The rugged nature that had made the man what he was,

one of the richest merchants of Manchester, was not one to show any outward sign of grief; in that respect he and the proud aristocrats met on the same ground, but here the sympathy ended. Mr. Gillbanks recoiled before the studied politeness of the Duke, and was moreover deeply hurt at Penelope's refusal to see him. He had hated the marriage, and Clytie had openly said it was only a money affair, but she liked the reflected glory acquired from her brother's marriage. There had never been much in common between the brother and sister. Philip was of a nature naturally so refined, so pure and elevated, that Clytie's purse-proud vulgarity and love of show had recoiled from contact with a being whose actions, in her eyes, were the result of incipient insanity. To have no wish to make the most of yourself, no desire to shine by wealth, no worldly ambition, and, above all, not to be ashamed of his hero-worship for a poor aristocrat, who was himself but half sane, all this was beyond her understanding.

The loss of her brother was therefore to Clytie not a personal loss in the true sense of the word, but of course she was properly shocked and horrified, and she was not a little indignant that by Philip's will, duly attested by her father, a very large portion of the Gillbanks wealth passed to Penelope. However, though large, it was not so large as would have been the case had Philip lived, and the consequence was that Clytie Gillbanks would in future be an heiress.

Clytie looked forward to a good time, for with her it would be a case of diamond cut diamond; so, as she smothered herself in the most expensive crape which she could buy, she did not sorrow as one who had no hope in the future—in this world, that is to say. Happily her father's state of health was a sufficient excuse to cut the visit as short as possible, and indeed what could they do? Everything that could be done had been done. Even now, ten days after the event, searchers were still kept tramping for miles round the dales, and still there were watchers stationed by the banks of the Rothery.

A great stillness had fallen over the place. There was no laughter heard, the servants moved about the Palace more than ever as if they were soulless machines, and Penelope herself was never seen except when twilight fell over the land; then she would walk out enveloped in black from head to foot, and walk swiftly up the glen path till she reached the small gate. She never varied her walk. Every day she went there, and the rest of the time she spent in her own sitting-room, working at the old embroidery frame, which had been put away since the day when she and the Duke had started for London.

All this time, however, her inner life was one of strange excitement. The needle flew swiftly backward and forward, and her new thoughts were worked into the delicate silk flowers.

She was free—free! How ardently she had longed for this moment, and now that it had come she could not realise it. She felt a great blank around her, as if she were alone in a desert, and as if some one had drawn a magic circle round her, bidding no one approach her on pain of death.

On pain of death! She shivered a little at the sentence. What was death? Her mother was dead, that was almost natural; but Philip was dead, and that she could not yet understand. Had she wished for his death? In words, never, but in something more powerful than words, she had called for a freedom that nothing but death could give.

And now she was free!

Sometimes at this juncture of her thoughts she would push her work away and pace up and down the room. Then she would look out of the window repeating over and over again: "I am free! I am free!"

But these words did not impress her with the fact, words and ideas having no connecting link. Perhaps, she argued, the news had come too suddenly upon her, perhaps by-and-by she would realise it. Now she could only say it: "I am free!"

Even in the ordinary sense of the word she could not feel it, for over and over again she caught herself listening for Philip's footsteps, as she had often done before, with a feeling of dread and shrinking. Was this because Philip had had no funeral service read over him, because no one had closed his eyes, no one had heard his last words?

When it came to this thought a terrible eeriness took possession of her, and her loneliness and freedom so frightened her that she was always forced to ring the bell violently. Betty invariably answered the summons, for no one else was allowed to come into Penelope's room. But when Betty entered with her quiet ways and her question as to what the Princess needed, Penelope quickly made up some excuse, or invented some need. Usually she said:

"Tell the Duke to come and see me when he is not busy."

The Duke was seldom too busy to come to his niece; but here again there was disappointment. A great shadow seemed to lie between them. They could not talk about Philip; instead, therefore, the Duke plunged into business matters. When a certain time had elapsed she would be mistress of a very large income, but her father must be persuaded to use his new-found treasure in repaying the cost of the repairs, or else he must give up his right to all interference. Lawyers made many difficulties and must be satisfied. One day the Duke added:

"That north turret, for instance, is really barely safe. The architect said so when we first began work; but your father is most persistent against its being repaired. I tried again yesterday, and I—I really was afraid of his fury. But as things are, what can one do? He is not too irresponsible to manage many things, and as long as possible we must keep him with us. Besides, doctors are queer fish, and we don't want the faculty prying into our affairs. Lawyers are bad enough. Mr. Gillbanks's man of business is really a fellow one can hardly ask to sit down."

"What can you expect of such people?" said Penelope scornfully.

"However, whatever happens, you, my Pennie, are safe and independent of all the changes and chances of the house of Winskell. Your future can be nothing but brilliant."

"Oh, uncle!" she said, standing up and catching her breath a little. "Don't say that. I am a true Winskell, you know I would rather fall with its old name, I—I—but now, anyhow, I am free to——" she broke off quickly—what was she saying?

The Duke did not appear to have noticed her words, and continued:

"It was for the house of Winskell you and I worked so hard. We have succeeded on every side, for really to depend on your father is to lean on a very poor support."

"He is the King," she said, sitting down again to her work, and the words seemed to do her good, for she could realise them. One could not be free of all burdens; perhaps, after all, there was some advantage in accepting a few. In this case it was the honour of the old name that was bound up in it; her father was the King.

There was a long pause between them; both felt the strange something that was wanting to their happiness, in spite of their success. On the Duke's side, as long as the King was the head of the family, even nominally, how could the glory of the house be increased? And for Penelope, she knew that she had yet to face her position. All the courage of the Winskells would be wanted to make her really free to carry out her design.

The days went slowly, very slowly by, for she lived in a torpid state. The future, to which she had offered so much in the old days, had not fulfilled its part, it had yet to give her happiness. In that old compact she had forgotten to ask for it, believing that joy was everywhere; but she had found out her mistake, and now, with all the strength of her strong nature, she called out that the future must add happiness to the wealth it had already supplied. She had tried wealth without happiness, and she had found it to be wanting, woefully wanting.

One day she spent all the cold, gloomy afternoon in deep thought; she did not even ply her needle, but sat near the old open hearth where the great logs rested on the shining andirons. Nero found his way up to her, and stretched himself at her feet. She did not notice him till suddenly she rose and laughed softly.

"They call me Philip's widow," she said aloud; "but I want to be—to be a wife, his wife." Then she wrote one line on a sheet of paper and sent it that evening. The envelope was directed to Forster.

OFF BEATEN TRACKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

I BEGAN by walking right off to Troutbeck in the cool of the evening, with just a night kit in a cartridge case, a macintosh on one arm and a stick in the other hand. A man wants no more than this, plus fair endowment in the matter of lungs and legs. Then, given a patient spirit and rather more than an average appreciation of Nature's excellences, he ought to have some halcyon hours among the Lakes.

They seemed to compassionate me on the coach that scrambled up towards Windermere on the Patterdale road. I returned them their pity threefold. A pack of people squeezed together so that rib ran into rib, some holding umbrellas betwixt them and the exquisite summer sun on its wane, and all patently perspiring and matted with dust; newly-wedded couples, ill-assorted folk from two or three continents, and the tramp of horses' feet and the jingle of their harness dulling their ears against the carol

of blackbirds and linnets—in the name of joy wherein lay their superiority? I was free as air, could breathe—and perspire if necessary—at my ease, whistle and swing my stick, stop where I chose to look at Windermere's silver, gleaming beyond the tree-tops, and take my fill of the dark mountains that frame the lake's head. Half-way I sat on a stile, and bared my hair to a shower. The clover smelt the sweeter for the moisture, and the birds piped more ardently, as if they had just received from heaven the boon their throats most craved.

That night and the next I slept at the "Mortal Man," in Troutbeck. My landlady, who did all the waiting on me, was a hearty, skimpy, nut-brown person of the middle age, with wonderful teeth and a trick of never addressing me as "sir." She had no guest but myself. I could thus sit untroubled at the great bow window of her inn, which gazed down Troutbeck's green at a section of Windermere's middle reach, smoke my pipe, think and dream at my pleasure. That ancient wrestler, Walker, of Troutbeck, came hither to drink ale and talk. There were two or three more with him. They live under idyllic conditions in Troutbeck, among meadows and mountains and remote from the railway's screech. That, however, does not prevent them from being very fond of ale. My landlady was new to the place, having lately come from another dale. She told of the anxiety the Troutbeck revellers caused her at first, but she flattered herself she had now taken their measure and measured herself with them—satisfactorily.

Years back the "Mortal Man" bore a signboard inscribed as follows:

> O mortal man that liv'st on bread,
> How comes thy nose to be so red?
> Thou silly ass, that look'st so pale,
> It comes of Sally Birkett's ale.

My skimpy, nut-brown landlady was Sally Birkett's successor.

England has many admirable lanes, but none, to my mind, more admirable than Troutbeck's, where these run towards the wilds at the head of its glen. You have mountains on either hand; the beck, of course, more or less, by your side; flowery meadows sloping this way and that; and such a tangle of honeysuckle and hawthorn for hedges as the eye loves to behold. Amid the hawthorn are wild raspberries—with a fine enduring flavour—and here and there white and pink foxgloves and ferns innumerable. A little church tinkles its bell in a hollow where several of these seducing byways agree to meet.

There is a remarkable academic warning on a stile in the neighbourhood, where the bough of a tree threatens damage to the explorer. The words "Mens tuum caput" are as good in their way as one glass—or two—of Sally Birkett's ale doubtless used to be.

From the "Mortal Man" I hied me on the third day to Mardale by Haweswater. My landlady said the weather looked bad. It did—there could be no question about it. Windermere, down the valley, was three parts lost in rain. It remained so lost while I breakfasted on the freshly-picked strawberries and the new-laid eggs of my landlady's demesne. Yet all the while Troutbeck was under glorious sunshine, and the mountains I had to face were clear to their summits. The Troutbeck bees seemed to have no doubt that it would be good weather for them; their excitement among the honeyed flowers was confusing. Yet even had it rained hard on us I should not have tarried. The man who fears a soaking must not come to Westmoreland. He should first of all take to his heart the subtle description of the Lake District contrived—if the papers are to be believed—by the proverbial School Board boy: "The English lakes are supposed to be very beautiful; they are very wet."

I started impetuously, resolved to reach Mardale before the rain. It is about a ten-mile walk. But the walk is a climb or a descent the whole way, and includes the summit of High Street as its crowning point. High Street is two thousand six hundred and sixty-three feet above the sea level. I also went over Ill Bell and Froswick—bold little peaks with nasty rocks to the east. The sun, when it was not veiled, was fearful. And ever, it seemed, I was likely to be absorbed in the mist that drifted with the rain up Troutbeck's vale—soon far beneath me—with a menacing air. It might have been bad to be caught on these fells, and assuredly I should have had an anxious hour ere getting down the rocks of Rough Crag towards Mardale. As it was, I nearly slipped into Blea Water, eight hundred feet down. Few things in the Lake District are better worth seeing than the dark, knotted crags of High Street over Blea Water, and the black precipices of Harter Fell to the south. These objects enclose the head of Mardale and Haweswater, and the world knows not of their glory.

Time was when the North-Western Railway threatened Mardale with intrusion.

Look on the map, and you may understand it. The line was to run from Penrith by Haweswater, and through the mountains to Kendal. The gods be praised that £ s. d. stood in the way. It would have cost a fortune to tunnel under Harter Fell, and all Mardale's peace would have been spoiled.

As it is, the "Dun Bull Inn"—I decline to call it an hotel—the parsonage, the church, Chapel Hill, and a farmstead or two constitute the village, which stretches divinely up two green glades towards the mountains. Ice-cold springs and lonely waterfalls feed the becks in these two sequestered dales, and the bleating of sheep mingles with the bark of collie dogs and the voice of the waters in the shadowed solitudes. Lower down you see the blue length of Haweswater, with the green oak-wood of Naddle Forest on the steeps of one side, and the bare highlands, some two thousand feet in elevation, which separate Haweswater from Ullswater on the other side.

I found the "Dun Bull" emptier even than the "Mortal Man." Even the landlord and his lady had gone off to Penrith for the day. But I was taken in hand by a suave old man, with thick, straight, white hair—a man for a poet to rhyme about—and with his aid I broke my fast in a cool room. I shall long remember this old man. He was better than a directory at local records, and possessed a most engaging gift of gossip. And when I had lunched under his venerable care, I strolled to the churchyard and lay among the tombs on a pile of new-cut grass, alone with my reflections and a cigar.

Mardale church must rank with the other ecclesiastical curiosities of the Lake District. It has a sweet situation and sweet surroundings, and its nave is just eight paces long. Its average congregation is ten or twelve, though its twelve curt pews will hold about three persons each. The oaken beams of its roof show the axe marks of their smoothing. From its windows you may, during the sermon, feast your eyes on the cascades which perennially tumble from the cliffs Swindale way.

What a cure for a clergyman to hold! His ministrations may well run risk of drifting into a quite peculiarly parochial groove. As he stands in his pulpit, he might, with a wand, touch all his congregation on the head—if they would tolerate the familiarity. Of a man in such a situation some unconventionality may almost be claimed as a duty. He must either grow to be loved with an uncommon affection, or degenerate into an unamiable eccentric, the mock and butt of his few parishioners.

There is a quaint epitaph to a lad of fifteen in this Mardale churchyard. "He was," we are told, "always grave and decent in devotion, very dutiful to his parents, amiable and pleasant to his brothers and sisters, courteous and gentle in his demeanour, ingenious and active, and of a mild disposition, beloved of every one. His death lamented by many."

Yet he was one of a stout stock for all his virtuousness. The Holmeses of Mardale—he being a slip of them—have lived here since the time of John. Only in the last decade have the family failed of male heirs. Later in the evening I spent an hour or two in the gloaming with the present male representative of the clan, who was that by marriage. He showed me the "Luck of Mardale"—a pale brown beaker of delft with the words "Hugh De M." upon it. The vessel lacks one handle, but it is otherwise hale. It holds about a pint, and the mind may see a rare vision of its vicissitudes in accepting the common tradition that it came to Mardale when the first of the family accepted the valley in tenure from King John. One of the collie dogs of its present holder nearly gripped me at the calf as I returned in the dark to the "Dun Bull" with some such thoughts in my head. These northern sheep dogs are wonderful brutes. But I never get on the fells among the sheep without wishing that their sagacity went a little farther. They ought really to be able to distinguish between a harmless pedestrian and a designing tramp. The problem, however, is one they never take time to face.

Haweswater is as charming as little Mardale. It is very lonely, and after sunset its fish leap at the moths with exquisite enthusiasm. On my second afternoon by its shores I lay for long under the shade of a gnarled hawthorn on a promontory of the Naddle woods, and marvelled at the lake's neglect by the tourist world. It is out of the way, to be sure; but that ought to be only an additional incentive to the visitor. No craft broke the line of its two and a half miles of length. And the noble amphitheatre of its southern end was a sight for the gods. There are no trim villas here, and no lodging-houses. The "Dun Bull" rules supreme in the district. Trollope's Thornthwaite Hall at the other end of the lake is a famous old white manor house, with a host of milking cows in its

stalls. In the three miles betwixt the Hall and the "Dun Bull" there is but one house, saving the parsonage, of more pretension than the common farmstead.

By the way, there is an intimation savouring of the feudal times set up near Haweswater. "Notice is hereby given," it runs, "that any person presuming to unfix or use a Boat for any purpose whatever on this lake without permission from ——— will be prosecuted." The tourist feels small when he encounters such swelling manifestoes. Perchance, too, he asks himself what in the world he would do if somehow he saw some one drowning in the lake. Would he dare, in the face of such large words, to unfix a boat, or would he forbear? The notice, however, is but another proof of the privacy of Haweswater and little Mardale.

My second night at Mardale closed in ominously. The mountains early put on their vestments of cloud, the wind sighed, and the glass sank steadily. I was not therefore desperately disappointed to awake in the morning with the storm orchestra in my ears. Rain was falling in serried lines, and the knoll of pines opposite my window was but dimly visible through the shafts. Under an eave of the "Dun Bull," which I could have reached with my hand, a starling had a nest, and a young family in the nest. The methodical bird was going to and fro in the turmoil, feeding her children. She looked very dismal in her wet plumage, and the very worms she brought to her babes dripped moisture from their wriggling extremities.

To be or not to be? I put the question to the "Dun Bull" household and received no encouragement to depart. It did seem a bit rash to face the fells "while rocking winds were piping" so very loud, and dampness so manifestly ruled the roost. Nevertheless, after breakfast, having seen to my flask, I paid my bill, endued myself in my macintosh, and faced the elements. There is pleasure in serene skies and the breath of warm dry zephyrs. There is also pleasure, though of a different kind, in battling with the hurricane—even in being, for once in a way, thoroughly soaked.

Again and again I stopped for breath under the steep shelter of the crags by way of which I fought to the uplands of High Raise. The clouds which whirled about me parted once in a half-hour or so. Mardale glowed like an emerald far down, and was then all obliterated again. So it continued until I was on the watershed, fighting tooth and nail with the tempest. But for the intermittent rifts of sunlight I might have gone gravely astray. As it was, these and my compass sufficed. The sheep seemed amazed to observe a tourist under such weather conditions, and their lambs made much ado about nothing. Here, too, as elsewhere, I came upon dead "muttons," tainting the air and showing how the ravens had explored them. But the rest of the herd do not appear to mind these skeletons at their feasts. They graze pacifically by the decomposed remains.

There is a Roman road on these heights running nearly due north—at least, so my guide book indicated. But I traversed it without knowing it. What in the world could the Romans want with a thoroughfare two thousand five hundred feet above common ground? Even as an eyrie they might have chosen better.

At length I was rewarded for my perseverance, obstinacy, idiocy, or whatever you like to term it. The green hollow of Rampsgill gleamed beneath me during one of the weather's kindly moments, and the bold tump of the Nab rock on the other side told me I had not trusted my compass in vain. Ullswater, too, was visible at the end of another glen. It looked like a pool of lead. Beyond, everywhere, were the lower parts of the mountains, their heads all in angry clouds. Helvellyn was conjecturable only by the inordinate inkiness of the heavens in its quarter.

The slope of the mountains towards Fusedale, which lets upon Ullswater at Howtown, is something prodigious. It is a declivity to be tackled with beam ends. But I quite declined to adopt this humiliating mode of descent. Besides, really the grass was too wet for anything.

Now, if ever a man merited pneumonia or some equally obnoxious lung affection, surely I did. I ran with rain. Yet I lunched at Howtown with an abounding appetite, and afterwards took steamer to Patterdale, all dripping as I was. There were two or three young couples on the boat, enjoying the bliss of the honeymoon under umbrellas. The man at the wheel cast a fish-like eye of wonder at them what time he was not shaking the rain from his nose. "There's days," he said, in a moment of confidence, "when the boat's full of 'em. Astonishing what a difference there is in their conduc', sir!" His commentary may seem uncalled for, but it was not. For while the damsel under one umbrella might be seen furtively stroking her husband's

wet cheeks and smoothing his bedraggled whiskers, under another umbrella man and wife sat as nearly as possible back to back.

Wet I was, and wet I stayed till bedtime. I yearned to make acquaintance with Striding Edge in storm, and would have attempted it there and then had not the rain assumed an appearance of stubborn cruelty hard to credit. There was no looking at it.

But the next day at seven o'clock I was afoot, blithe and determined. The portents were not hopeful. To a palm's breadth of blue there was an empyrean of gloom, and the clouds raced from the old rainy quarter. This latter feature argued wild doings on Helvellyn's height; and the thunder of the Grisedale beck tossing its white waves over the rocks in its deep-wooded bed told of the moisture draining from the uplands towards the lake. I soon saw more of it. The heavens darkened, and an hour before I had come through the brackeny slopes to the beginning of the Edge, the black mountains were glorious under the white lace of their cascades. Was I crazy to think of groping through the upper mist and rain in a wind some thirty miles an hour strong? I'm sure I don't know; I know only that I liked the buffeting—up to a certain point. But I had to behave like a ship in a storm. It was impossible to stand the pressure upon a bellied macintosh. I therefore reefed all sail, and took my buffeting and drenching as a matter of course.

Worse came upon me when I was nearing the apex of the Edge. I had never yet been so maltreated by Dame Nature. The gusts were staggering. Once and only once the mist blew aside for a welcome but delusive instant to show me Red Tarn far down to the right. I would almost rather have foregone the spectacle. It was not pleasant to think of being caught in the claws of the wind, lifted, toyed with for a while in the furious upper air, and then dropped like a shot into that ink-coloured pool of desolation.

At length I gave it up. The thing seemed impossible, nor do I care if more accomplished cragsmen smile at me compassionately. I turned tail, and in a rage fought my way down Helvellyn's slopes to Grisedale, with a surge of mist and rain at my back. By the melancholy tarn I rested, and then I scrambled round by Dolly Waggon towards Wythburn, taking the huge mountain in flank. Once, for sustenance and comfort, I lit a cigarette, but a moment afterwards the wind hissed the little luxury from my mouth and swept it I could not tell whither. It was three o'clock ere I had stumbled through my destined number of bogs and descended, ill-humoured and hungry, to the little "Nag's Head Inn," where I remembered ten years back having eaten an excellent cherry pie. I flattered myself that, though beaten, I was not disgraced.

The "Nag's Head" visitors' book and the "Nag's Head" larder were both invigorating. They seemed even to have an effect on the weather. I had not done with the cold beef ere the sun shone on me and set me steaming.

This visitors' book beats most such literary records. Amid much that was readable and commonplace, I came upon a devout remark and a profane one that may bear passing on. An appreciative and rapturous tourist writes:

> The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

("Who said it wasn't?" demands an inquisitive successor.)

The profane entry may excite more interest:

> I found the beer good.
> W. E. GLADSTONE.

The Wythburn church over against the "Nag's Head," and on the very ankle of great Helvellyn, is good to see, it is so neat and snug. Hartley Coleridge should behold it now.

> Humble it is and meek and very low,
> And speaks its purpose by a single bell.

But its humility was doubtless, in Coleridge's time, not disassociated from a certain amount of dirt and neglect. There is none such in 1894. A pigmy in size, it is a very martinet for its orderliness.

So bright an afternoon sent me and my cartridge case afoot again at four o'clock. Thirlmere was a tongue of silvery surface as I climbed the fells west of it for Rosthwaite. The air was fresh and exhilarating, but the bogs were execrable. The miry plateau I had to cross was trackless, though with the Borrowdale mountains written plainly against the western sky. My guide book counselled me to make for a certain cairn in a certain direction. I did so, as I fancied; but when I got within a stone's throw of it, my cairn walked off—'twas a sheep. So easily are poor mortals misguided in this vale of tears!

Anon, however, I descended abruptly upon the little hamlet of Watendlath by its shining tarn. Here I drank milk in

a sober cottage. The first person I chanced upon in the house was an idiot man, tossing his bare legs on an unsightly bedstead. Dear old Wordsworth would have moralised in blank verse upon his sad mumblings and the spectacle he cut. As for me, I wished him "good evening," drank my milk, and climbed on to Rosthwaite.

There was a divine sunset at Rosthwaite. All the peaks of Borrowdale, from the Sca Fell mass at one end to Eagle Crag at the other, were transfigured by the pearly evening light, and above them the heavens remained till bed-time scored with crimson and purple, and saffron and gold. Schopenhauer has rather laboriously told us why a beautiful view so tranquillises and satisfies. "It is," he says, "the only one among the complicated brain-phenomena which is always absolutely regular, blameless, and perfect." People make a wearing mistake by gadding about on the Continent among famous buildings and picture galleries. If they want a holiday, they should tell Mother Nature so at first hand. Mr. Ruskin and Schopenhauer are at one on this point.

By noon the next day I was lying on my back on Great Gable's summit, staring at Sca Fell, the Pike, and Lingmell over the way. It was Queen's weather at last. I felt the beginning of blisters at the nape of my neck.

I had enjoyed some glorious toil to get to my perch. Oh, the sweltering of Sty Head Pass! But there was compensation in the cold water that gushes so lavishly and beautifully from the moss into the tarn at its head. I knew of these matchless springs. Though I streamed with moisture and was parched with thirst, I postponed the pleasure of slaking the latter till I reached them, even as the epicure who is aware that a Heliogabalian feast is preparing for him does not very much mind being told it will not be ready for another half-hour. I lunched on a quart of this icy water and a cigarette. It may seem a poor sort of banquet, but then I had the mountains about me for an entrée, and as the great Napoleon used to say at dinner-time, "On vit par des entrées."

There is a vertical pike of rock below Great Gable's summit which the crazy love to climb. It affords them just a chance—little more—of breaking their necks. It is bracketed with the Pillar Rock as "an achievement." I gazed at both these little difficulties and yearned not to tackle them. While I lay on Great Gable a black dot, which I take to have been a man, stood at the base of the Pillar Rock—apparently making an estimate of it. I left him weighing his life against the adventure. If he were a married man with a family, he should have taken his wife to the rock and had her opinion ere attempting the clamber.

Whenever I feel an itch to freshen my idea of Sca Fell and his neighbours, I shall scale Great Gable. It is one of the most impressive vantage spots in the kingdom.

But it is not nice descending thence to the dimple betwixt it and Kirkfell. Rolf Ganger—well known to most of us—was so called, they tell us, because he was so big that, because no horse could be found to carry him, he was always obliged to walk. Rolf Ganger would, in getting down where I got down, have set half Great Gable sliding at his heels. Even I was nearly overwhelmed.

More ups and downs and other springs in the mountain sides—a succession of such incidents at length brought me to the head of the Buttermere glen. And here I must needs choose an unconventional descent. I loathe exaggeration, yet I fancy the crags down which I let myself gingerly a foot and a hand at a time were scarcely five degrees out of the perpendicular. Once or twice mortal anxiety seized me for her own. But I evaded the awful lady's keeping in time, and so came whole and hungry into Buttermere village, long past the luncheon hour. They were cutting bracken on the hot hillsides by the roadway. Its perfume was luscious as that of a pineapple.

After luncheon I lay on the grass in the sun and dried. I smoked and reflected on Nature and man, and forgot my reflections one after the other, and so on until the maids came to call the kine to be milked. One of the maids used her leg rather than her voice as an incentive. She came my way, and I asked her about poor Mary of Buttermere. She took no pains to conceal her belief that poor Mary was only a plain young woman when she was alive, and not worth making a fuss about.

I had one more morning for my pleasure. It opened with overwhelming heat, so that early in the day I longed to be able to walk in my bones. At eight o'clock bees and butterflies were coquetting about the same flowers in the furious gladness of the midsummer, and the kine stood chest-deep in the lake to cheat the flies.

This, my last walk, was from Buttermere along the shores of Crummock, and thence by Coledale Pass to Keswick. Coledale Pass

is not common ground. It is the narrowest thing in passes in the district. I thought there would not be the breadth of a man at its summit. But there was, and beyond it one of the finest waterfalls Cumberland can show. Force Crag blocks the way to the east, and its face is embroidered with cascades.

Ere two o'clock I was in the metropolis of the Lakes. The shopkeepers were doing a large business in lead pencils and mugs marked "A Present from Keswick." Though I took ice with my liquor, this could not for coolness compare with the sparkling water of the hillsides, fresh from Nature's cellar.

POPPIES.

All above the sunshine dazzled, all below the poppies blazed,
Pink and white and glowing crimson; crumbled, like the hands that raised,
The grey columns stood among them, each a record, stern and dumb,
Of the varied past behind them, waiting for the times to come.

All above the sunshine dazzled, all below the poppies gleamed,
And the soft south wind among them murmured like a soul that dreamed;
Dreamed of sweeter, rarer flowers, dreamed of sunshine fiercer far,
Dreamed of all that it had slept on, far beyond its own fair star.

All above the sunshine dazzled, all below the poppies shone,
And one stood 'mid blooms and breezes, dreaming of the days long gone,
Where the long-green English meadows, bathed in glory from the west,
Heard a whisper, saw a meeting; and tears blotted out the rest.

All above the sunshine dazzled, all below the poppies swayed,
As the light airs from the ocean with their fair, frail petals played;
She dashed aside the dew that dared to dim her proud eyes' steady light,
Choosing out the gayest poppies, "They shall catch his glance to-night."

THE MILL OF MINNONY.

A COMPLETE STORY.

The Mill of Minnony existed only in name. It once had done work, and characteristic traces were left. The old wheel at the corner stood half dilapidated and wholly picturesque. On windy nights it creaked and moved fearfully round, but for the most part it realised that its part was played. The mill-lade that led to it was rotten, and the mill-pond that fed the stream was drained, and grew weeds, and flowers, and rushes instead of providing water for the mill.

The banks at each side were a tangle of honeysuckle, and the meadowsweet and the buttercups alternated and succeeded each other every season. The Mill House was a house of angles, red-tiled, and apparently thrown against the mill-wheel. On the top a rusty weathercock creaked and groaned. Rats ran over the tumbled-in granary floor with an hereditary instinct of the fitness of things.

Behind the house was a steep brae. It was a brae of early primroses, straggly briar trees, and long trails of bramble. It was fringed by weeping birches, and the river ran below it and skirted the old mill-dam.

At the top of the hill stretched a line of Scotch firs. The evening glow shone through the trees, sometimes yellow, sometimes red. The fir-trees stood dark and straight, even when the mist rose off the water merging everything into a hazy general "value" of grey atmosphere.

Joan MacLeod stood at the little window of the mill kitchen on one of these evenings. A crescent moon was in the sky. It appeared to hang in the grey mist. She turned a penny in her pocket, as she looked mechanically out, and thought of a wish.

"Dinna ye, lass," said her mother sharply from the fireside. "Things gang wrang o' themsel's wi'oot fairly temp'in' Providence yon wye."

"Which wye?" said the girl, still staring out of the window.

"Yon's the new meen, and ye are looking at her thro' glass," said the old woman severely. "Ye winna get your wush, and ill may happen o' it."

The girl laughed.

"It disna mak'," she said. "It wisna muckle o' a wush, ony wye."

"Had it to do wi' George?"

The old woman asked it sharply. She was a withered old woman, with sharp features and bright eyes. Her grey hair was tucked away under a white cap. A shawl was pinned across her shoulders. She wore a stuff apron over her short woollen skirt.

"Ye mark my words," she repeated impressively. "Ill wull come o' it. I wouldna trust ony man."

Joan smiled in reply. She was used to the pessimistic utterances of her mother. "Ye are aye hintin' at that, mither," said Joan lightly. "And if onything is gaun to happen, it 'll come wi'oot sic nonsense."

"I wouldna promise," said the old woman obstinately. "I hae a notion o' making things siccar, and nae deleeberately trying to upset them. Life is gey chancey."

She shook her head, and added: "And George is but a man."

Joan turned from the window and sat opposite her mother on the oak settle by the fire. She knitted placidly. The old woman rambled on.

"Your feyther often tell't me if it hadna been for me he wud niver have thocht o' me. I pit the notion into his heed, and syne I keepit it there. Noo, it's this and it's that, and I tell ye it disna dee. I dinna haud wi' notions o' that sort, and it's time ye tell't George to sattle things."

The girl looked up.

"I winna," she said. Her tone had the sharp, incisive ring of determination. It cowed the old woman for a moment.

"Weel, Joan, gang your ain gait. Mony hae deen that afore you, and found themselves left. I hope it winna be too late, or that I'll hae the satisfaction o' seein' my words proven."

There was silence after that. Old Mrs. MacLeod deftly wove coloured scraps of material into a mat. Grey double dahlias and magenta roses grew out of the remnants of flannel and stuffs, surrounded by lesser flowers of nondescript hues.

"It's gey lonely here," she said, with a sigh.

"If ye wad stir yersel', Joan, it wad be better."

Joan looked up from her knitting placidly.

"It's nae different to general," she said, and went back to her stocking. Her mother snorted.

"And ye are as happy there, and wad be, if ye were gaun to sit there and knit a' your life. It niver seems to strike ye that we twa lonesome bodies here might be murdered in oor beds ony nicht, and naebody ken for days. It wad be different if there was a man aboot. It wad be mair shortsome, and the mull micht be set a-going again. In your feyther's time there was aye cairts o' corn coming, and the mull aye grinding, grinding, and the watter splashing. Yon was living."

It was a time-worn complaint. Joan had grown callous to it. The past glories of the mill did not appeal to her. She was perfectly happy with her life as it was. This was a particular grievance of her mother's. Another was Joan's plainness. Joan was a tall woman, with strong, vigorous features and limbs. She had a low brow, with black hair which grew off it; steadfast brown eyes, a straight nose, and a large mouth. She was absolutely colourless. The neighbours agreed with Mrs. MacLeod that her daughter was regrettably plain. Joan was singularly free from vanity. She never troubled to consider her looks.

"I ken thinkin' on't winna add or tak' a cubit from oor stature."

Mrs. MacLeod was wont to say impressively:

"But it wad dee a lot to mend matters. It's only a weel-faured face can dee wi'oot thinking. And a new hat dis wurk wonders."

It had been a great surprise to Mrs. MacLeod to find that Joan had found favour in any man's sight. The fact of her engagement to George Alexander had given Joan's mother endless subject matter to reflect on. George was a sort of connexion of their own. He had knocked about in Australia several years, and had come back at twenty-eight with an affectation of indifference towards his native land—the result of thirsting for it every day of his absence. He had returned in late summer when the barley harvest was in full swing. George had sauntered into the field. Joan was among the gatherers. Her hair was gathered up into a big knot tightly twisted up behind. Her sun-bonnet had fallen off. Her sleeves were turned up; she looked a strong, capable woman. She stood apart, resting for a moment. The sun shone in its full force; the heavy "swish" of the ripe yellow barley as it fell, formed a framework to her as she stood there. George stood idly looking at the reapers; they threw jests to him, and laughed as they moved down the field. Joan alone said nothing. She smiled at him as she passed. Her smile set him thinking. He still stood there, for a momentary glimpse of an ideal had come to him. It was one of those moments that come at least once in a man's life. It was the touch of the home atmosphere, the simple labour, the sunshine, and a woman's smile that prompted it. It did not last long, but out of it grew an idea that dominated three lives.

"They're gey ahin' the times here," was what he said, and he sauntered off the field.

The result of the idea was that several weeks after George had asked Joan to marry him. She had said "yes" quite simply, and matters had remained like this for about eighteen months. George and Joan both showed a philosophical calm about their engagement. Old Mrs. MacLeod was the only one who agitated over the matter at all. She began to be afraid that left to themselves they would drift apart,

and that Joan would do nothing to prevent it.

One evening George came in after Joan had been peculiarly aggravating on the subject of their marriage.

"It's a fine nicht," he said, as he sat down and looked at the fire.

Joan nodded. Mrs. MacLeod tossed her head and coughed. It did not occur to either of the others that a reply was necessary, so this passed unnoticed. Mrs. MacLeod coughed again a little louder.

"It's nae wonner ye hae a cauld," said George affably, "wi' a climate like this."

This was too much for Mrs. MacLeod.

"Cauld, indeed; I nivver was better in my life. Fat I meant was if a 'fine nicht' wis a' ye had to say, there wisna muckle ees o' ye coming to say it."

George stared. Joan looked up quickly.

"Ay, I mean it, and I hae meant it some time," continued Mrs. MacLeod. She had made her start, and she was determined to have her say. "I hae nae wush to meddle, and ye needna heed me; but I wad like, George, to ken if ye mean to marry my dother Joan?"

The old woman shut her mouth and looked at the young man. It was an opportunity she had been thirsting for, and she meant to carry it to the end. George and Joan both looked at her; they were both too astonished to say anything.

"Div ye, George Alexander?" asked Mrs. MacLeod. Her voice rose shrilly.

"I had thocht o't," said George slowly.

"Had thocht o't!" repeated Mrs. MacLeod. This time she fairly shrieked. "And ye sit there and say that to my face?"

"I didna say I wisna still thinking o't," retorted George. The idea that it was possible to break his word struck him tangibly for the first time. He repeated more firmly, "Na, I'll stick to my word."

"Hoots," said old Mrs. MacLeod, in a more modified key. "Then mebbe ye wad like to gie a little proof. Words are fine eneugh, but they winna marry Joan; and it's nae likely she'll ever hae anither chance."

George laughed.

"I'm nae a man to gang back frae my word," he said loftily. He began to feel pleased with the sacrifice he was making as he glanced at Joan, who was sitting up with a face as determined and set as her mother's. She certainly looked rather a forbidding woman. Her hands were clenched, her lips compressed, her eyes were hard.

"Your mither is richt," said George. He spoke cheerfully, for he felt distinctly pleased with himself.

Joan had sat silent, and there was a moment's pause after George stopped speaking. Suddenly she rose. She had guessed the fact with a woman's intuition. Her knowledge of life came to her through her lover's careless tones. She grasped the truth at once, as only a strong type of woman can.

"There's nae need for ye to keep your word, George," she said. There was a defiant ring in her voice, otherwise it was hard and expressionless. "I dinna want it."

"Lord's sake, dinna be sich a fule," gasped her mother. "Ye shouldna play wi' men. They are aye kittle, and ye nivver ken."

George stared good-humouredly; then he laughed. The idea seemed to him preposterous.

"Weel, weel, Joan, we winna quarrel: we'll fix the day instead."

"I'm no seeking to quarrel," replied Joan doggedly, "an' I'm nae joking."

"Mercy!" breathed Mrs. MacLeod. She looked anxiously at her daughter, and repeated in a loud whisper, "Dinna, I tell ye. He'll tak' ye at your word, maybe."

Joan sat down. Her features had relaxed, but there was still an air of determination about her. George fidgeted uneasily. The old woman kept up a steady murmur of remonstrance.

"There's nae need to say mair," said Joan sharply. A' body mak's mistaks at times. George and I hae made een. I hae made up my mind noo, and George is free."

"And if he heeds a silly lass like you," put in her mother hastily, "he's a puir thing."

Then she began to cry, for George was silent.

"Mebbe ye dinna want her," she said suddenly, her tears vanishing. "Mebbe ye'd rather hae somebody else younger and bonnier? There's Janet McLaren; she'll be glad eneugh to tak' ye."

She spoke at George, but she glared at Joan. She felt rightly enough this was her biggest obstacle.

"If Joan's nae willin', I'm nae gaun to force her to it," he began slowly.

"It's a' ower," said Joan. "There hisna been much, noo there's naething ava'."

Joan got her way. To George it was partly a relief. Joan found it made more difference in her life than she had imagined. She had thought she would go back to the old placid life, and resume her normal condition,

but she discovered that this was not possible. Broken ends of life are not easily joined, and it began to dawn on her that there was a gap in her life. There was a restlessness and a nameless longing for something, an undefinable feeling that she had loved George, and had not known it till she lost him. It began to haunt her when she heard that George had taken her mother's chance advice about Janet McLaren. So every one said, at least, and Joan knew that, if it was true, life lay dreary before her.

"Deed, it's nae wunner he should be ta'en," said Mrs. MacLeod. "It's no that she's bonny. That aleen disna dee it, but she lats him see she thinks a hantle o' him. Noo it's a new goon, and syne it's a hat, and it's a' for him, and he kens it. Sich wicked extravagant folly. I wush, Joan, ye'd stir yoursel' and dee mair that wye. Ye micht get him back. The mull is worth his while. That wad aye coont agenst yon lass' chances."

Joan heeded none of it. She outwardly pursued her placid way. Inwardly she was consumed by a fire of jealousy. No one knew, and the days went on. The tale of the broken engagement was an old story, and the new one, though not openly announced, was accepted as a tacit fact by Joan and her mother. Janet McLaren admitted that George had not said anything about the wedding day.

"But I'm nae carin'," she said gaily. "I'm no prood to come after you, Joan, and I'll hae mair sense to keep him."

"There's nae body blamin' you for that," said Mrs. MacLeod.

She admired success.

"There's nae body could hae less sense than Joan, unless mebbe it's George," she added, to keep the balance even.

Joan sat through these conversations quietly. Once she broke through her reserve.

"Has George tell't you in words he lo'es you?" she asked Janet.

Janet blushed and frowned.

"I dinna ken," she said. "But he's aye comin' and comin', and he kens fat a' folk are sayin'."

Joan sighed. At the same time she felt that she would rather die than change the course of events by a single word or action. There are things in this world that have to be, that must exist, and we know it, and though we know it is in our power to change the surface of these things we dare not.

The nights turned frosty as the winter closed in. It seemed to her that the wind rose at night and moaned as it had never done before. The old weathercock creaked more fitfully, and the rats scampered about at nights. She heard above these sounds the rush of the little river, swollen by the rains and the melting of the snow up in the distant hills where it took its rise.

She looked out one night as she was going to bed. She shivered as a gust swept round the house. Then a silence came.

"It's a fearfu' night," she said hastily. "I hope nae one is oot in the storm."

She was shutting the door when a sound struck her ear. It seemed a wail. She stood still to listen, but it did not come again. "Joan!" it had seemed to her to come floating through the storm. For a long time she stood waiting apprehensively. Her heart beat at the unexplained feeling of suspense and fear.

"If it wis a human voice it 'll cry again," she said, to still her own fears.

Nothing came. The wind swept round the gables with shrill moans and cries.

"It was the wind," she said, and she shut the door.

In the night she woke. The same sense of apprehension seized her, and a feeling of dull reality came to her. "Joan!" the voice seemed to wail. It had a human ring about it, to her excited mind.

"God forgie me if it was a voice," she murmured, "for noo it's a spirit's voice that's crying. I couldna hear ony one in this storm."

She got up and dressed. Her room was upstairs, her mother slept in the box-bed built into the wall in the little kitchen. Softly and quietly she groped her way down, and got the lanthorn. She opened the door softly and stepped out. Her teeth chattered and her heart sank.

"I'm too late," she kept saying.

Still she kept on. The conviction was forced upon her that she had not been dreaming that some one had sought her aid. She tramped up and down the path; the wind met her, and nearly whirled her off her feet. There was no sign of anything.

"The bridge has gone," she said suddenly, as a gleam of light showed her a dark mass of woodwork which had floated down the river. "They aye said it wad the last five or sax winters, and noo it's fairly gone." She lifted her voice and shouted. No answer came. Gradually her fears subsided. She even laughed at her own exaggerated fears. "I winna tell ony soul fat I hae deen this nicht," she said as she shut the door, and crept back to her room.

She woke in the morning with a strange feeling of dread. By degrees the night's occurrence came back to her. Outside all was still and bright. She felt the same instinctive feeling that a tragedy had happened, which she had had it in her power to avert. She went about all day with a foreboding at her heart.

That afternoon she realised the truth. There was a tramp of feet past the window.

"Fat's yon?" asked Mrs. MacLeod eagerly. "Rin oot and see, Joan."

Joan sat still and fixed. Her breath came in short little gasps.

"I canna, mither. Bide a wee."

The old woman hobbled to the door and opened it.

"Fat's the stir?" she called shrilly.

George Alexander left the little group that were passing the "gale" end of the cottage.

"There's been an accident," he said solemnly. "Last nicht, after gloaming, Janet McLaren was coming hame frae her sister's. She was drooned in the river. The path's aye slippy, and, beside, the auld bridge has gone."

He passed on, and the thud of the footsteps died away.

Mrs. MacLeod stood silenced in the presence of Death. Over her shoulders Joan gazed.

"Joan! Joan! Joan!" the air seemed full of her own name. "Joan, save me!"

She had let it pass unheeded. Her rival was dead, drowned in the thirsty river beside the old mill-dam.

Neither woman spoke all that evening. Later on, her mother said simply:

"I'm glad ye didna try and win him back. Lass, it's a heavy hairt ye'd have had this nicht if ye'd done so."

"Eh, mither," said Joan, "it's heavier than ye ken."

She put her arms on the table, and laid her head on them.

The days passed somehow. Joan carried the weight with her. She felt as if her life would never end. It seemed to her that the grass was scarcely green on Janet's grave when George Alexander asked her a second time to be his wife. It came about unexpectedly, and in the matter-of-fact way in which crises in people's lives usually do come.

Joan was seated in the fir-wood, looking down on the hollow beneath, where the mill stood. A big heron sailed slowly down the valley; the bees hummed in the heather at her feet; a dragon-fly flitted about. The bracken had already begun to be tinted with yellow, though the summer was not yet over.

"Weel, Joan," said George Alexander. She started suddenly. "I was in yon field, and I watched you up the brae; I came after you."

The past months had told upon Joan. She had grey hairs, and there were little lines round her eyes. Her mouth had taken a little tremulous droop. Altogether there was more womanliness about her looks.

"We niver seem to meet noo," said George Alexander.

He was looking at her, curiously reminded of the day he had first seen her in the harvest field.

"I hae lang wished to see you," said Joan simply; "I hae something to tell ye—and I canna!" she almost wailed.

An inspiration seized George. He leaned forward.

"Are ye seeking to tell me ye liked me better than ye kenned?" he asked, smiling.

Joan drew back hastily.

"Na, na," she said, "onything but that. Lat her hae it a' still, George, for she's deid."

"Fat div ye mean?" asked George stupidly.

"It's Janet," said Joan simply. "I hae deen her enough hairm. I lat her dee."

George still stared. Joan repeated the episode of that terrible night. Her face was set and stern.

"Puir thing!" said George pityingly. "Puir thing!"

This time he took one of Joan's cold, unresisting hands.

"Ye couldna ken, Joan. And things are ta'en oot o' oor hands files."

It was George's first attempt at philosophy, and it did not soothe Joan.

"And sae I hear her crying on me a' the time," she said simply, as if it was an ordinary fact she was stating.

"And ye hiv borne the weary weight a' the time, Joan, and tell't naebody?"

"Naebody," said Joan briefly. "I hae wushed to tell you, but I was feared ye'd cast it at me, and I couldna bear that, George."

"I hae nae richt to cast it at you, Joan," said George solemnly.

"She was your sweethairt," said Joan.

She put her head down and moaned.

"Na," said George solemnly, "I niver had ane. Nane, except yersel', Joan."

"Folk said you were hers," said Joan, lifting her head, "and ye were aye there."

Somehow a little of the weary burden seemed lifted.

"Aye," said George.

Then he gave a nervous sort of laugh.

"I wisna gaun to be peetied by a' body."

"Then she had nane o' your love," said Joan solemnly.

"Ye hiv it a', Joan, tho' I didna ken afore."

Joan put up her hand.

"George, dinna say that."

"But I maun; I love ye, Joan. Will ye be my wife?"

"Niver, niver, George Alexander," she answered at length. "I couldna; I should hear her voice crying 'Joan,' and I wad feel I had stolen you frae her."

"That's nonsense," said the man sharply. "I niver lo'ed her."

"Then it's a' the worse," said Joan with true woman's logic.

She felt that somehow reparation must be paid to the dead—at whatever cost and sacrifice to the living. In vain George reasoned, Joan kept to her point.

"I couldna be happy, George. It wouldna be richt."

He lost his temper at last.

"Weel, there's nae mair to be said."

They rose up out of the heather. The sun had begun to go down behind the fir-trees. Joan gave a litle shiver.

It was not many weeks after this that George and she met again.

"I'm aff to Australia, Joan," he said sullenly.

Nothing had happened in the interval to shake the moral force of Joan's arguments. She started.

"Must ye gang, George?" she asked softly.

George was still angry with her foolish woman's insistence, but his wrath suddenly melted. He looked at her downcast eyes and trembling mouth.

"Not if ye bid me stay, Joan."

The river still flowed on in its old course. The fir-trees stood straight and dark at the top of the brae. But the brae was ploughed up and grew golden corn, and the old mill-dam was filled with water instead of the tangle of reeds and flowers. And all day the mill-wheel splashed cheerily round. The ghost of Joan's past was laid, merged into the happiness of her life.

"I aye said things were in the Lord's hands," said Mrs. MacLeod piously. "And noo the mull is stairted aince mair I ken it."

THE FREELAND COLONY SCHEME.

One does not look for Utopia in Africa, but there are many persons sanguine enough to think that out of the Dark Continent may be extracted a new social and economic light. Who knows? The Laputan philosophers thought to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, and it may be that out of the land of darkness and dark races future generations may receive light and leading. Still, we have our doubts of the practical results of the grand scheme for founding a socialistic colony of Europeans in the heart of Africa. Meanwhile let us see how the Freeland Colony Scheme originated, and what it designs.

Some two or three years ago, Dr. Theodor Hertzka, an Austrian economist, submitted to a large public meeting in Vienna a proposal for an attempt to solve the social problem. The groundwork of the plan was the establishment of a community, somewhere or other, on the basis of perfect liberty and economic justice, in which each individual member should have the unqualified right to control his own actions, and each worker should enjoy the fruits of his own labour.

It sounds vague, but it was not the vagueness that the Socialists objected to, it was that to turn skilled artisans into delvers and ditchers in a strange land would be to lower, not to raise, the level of civilisation. So Dr. Hertzka and his scheme were politely dismissed by the Socialists.

But the Doctor went ahead and elaborated his design in a book called "Freeland; a Social Anticipation," which found a large circulation and eager readers. A number of kindred spirits clustered around him, and laid their heads together, with the result that about the beginning of the present year it was announced that the time had arrived to make a practical attempt to carry out Dr. Hertzka's plan for the solution of the social problem. So a circular, or manifesto, was issued in the following terms:

"It is proposed to establish a community on the basis of perfect economic freedom and justice, a community which shall preserve the independence of its members, and shall secure to every worker the full and undiminished enjoyment of that which he produces. For the site of the new community a suitable area will be selected on the recently-discovered and still un-

occupied highlands surrounding Mount Kenia, in the interior of Equatorial Africa. According to the unanimous accounts of trustworthy explorers, these highlands are remarkably well adapted for colonisation by Europeans; the climate is excellent, the temperature throughout the year being very much like that of spring-time in Europe, and the land is extraordinarily fertile and rich in mineral products. Great Britain, within whose sphere of influence the district lies, has promised her protection, as well as complete freedom in the matter of internal economic arrangements. The Freelanders are already sufficiently numerous, and command the necessary capital to commence operations, and their preparations are now complete."

It was announced that certain members had been actively engaged for some time at Zanzibar and Lamu, and that a first party of selected pioneers would start about the end of February, to be followed a few weeks later by the remainder. A shallow-draught steamer was purchased and sent out, in which the expedition proposed to make the ascent of the River Tana for a distance of about three hundred and fifty miles. When they could get up no further, they would land and form a sort of permanent camp, while selected pioneers pushed on to Mount Kenia to select and prepare the place of settlement for the general body.

The first, or at all events an indispensable, qualification for a Freeland colonist was that he should be able to contribute fifty pounds towards the common fund. This sum was necessary to pay the passage of each from Hamburg to Lamu, in North-East Africa, and to provide maintenance for at least six months, as well as the needful implements. Dr. Hertzka sought for recruits among the Socialist working men of Austria, who, however industrious and however ardent as social reformers, could hardly be expected to have accumulated wealth to the extent of fifty pounds. Therefore public and private subscriptions in aid of the enterprise were needed, and these were forthcoming.

Early in March the first batch of colonists was despatched from Hamburg, and four of them were Britons. Dr. Hertzka thus really and seriously began his attempt to give a modern practical application to old doctrines of political economy. As an Austrian, he was handicapped by the fact that Austria has no new and unoccupied territory for experiment; but he boldly threw himself under the shelter of the British flag, without, perhaps, counting up what that shelter is worth in the Kenia region.

He could have carried out his experiment in Europe but for the high price of land here, and therefore he turned his attention to Equatorial Africa, where land is presumably obtainable without money and without price. At all events we do not remember that any mention of purchase was made in the proposal of the Freelanders to stake out and occupy land in Kenia. The colony is to be planted there, apparently, on the assumption that individual rights in land do not exist in Central Africa.

Cheap land, it is said, means cheap bread, and land can hardly be got cheaper than for nothing. But land is useless without labour, and the problem to be solved is how the labour which is being diverted to this particular land can be made remunerative.

It should be mentioned that while the Freeland Association originated in and has its centre in Austria, it is international in character, and has branches in England, Germany, America, Holland, Sweden, and Switzerland. From all these countries recruits have been drawn for the new colony, and yet it is only in Vienna that the Association has been formally legalised as a corporate body. Curiously enough, this democratic idea has met with more favour in Imperial and autocratic Austria than anywhere else. It "caught on" in Viennese society, and is patronised by the Austrian Government, who presented the pioneers with a lot of old breech-loaders wherewith to arm a native bodyguard. Moreover, the Government granted subsidies for scientific purposes and for the collection of objects for the Natural History Museum, and the Military Geographical Institute of Vienna undertook to supply the instruments necessary for the expedition.

The pioneers took with them a perfect battery of rifles, sporting guns, and revolvers, and this has by many been deemed a serious initial error, as it will give to the party the appearance of an armed expedition, calculated to arouse the fears and hostility of the natives.

It was upon this point that Mr. H. M. Stanley uttered some words of warning just as the party were leaving Hamburg. It is worth while recalling the opinion of one so experienced in African travel.

"I doubt greatly," he said, "the wisdom of permitting a body of armed whites to obtain a settlement in British African territory, unless all necessary guarantees

have been taken that these new-comers will respect native life and property, and that all negotiations with the natives respecting territory shall be conducted through the intermediary of the British Administrator. There are many other points on which I should like to be satisfied before I could view with favour this rather premature invasion of East Africa by an irresponsible community of whites. I should like to know whether they are free to roam over the country if they are dissatisfied with their first settlement, the limits and terms of their concession, and the nature of the privileges ceded to them. I should like to know also what precautions have been taken against several possible occurrences, which I foresee, by the directors of the East Africa Company. If the directors are satisfied that whatever may be the result of the enterprise, the natives will suffer no harm, and that under no pretext will they be permitted to embroil them politically, the movements of the adventurers will not be devoid of interest, though personally I have no faith in a community with such limited resources being able to achieve anything successfully. I have not heard that they are provided with return tickets, which, in my opinion, they are likely to need before many months."

From this it will be seen that Mr. Stanley does not regard the project with hope or favour. He says nothing about the country proposed to be occupied, for that is a region which lies outside his various spheres of operation. We must look elsewhere, therefore, for information on that point.

Captain Lugard, whose name is so closely associated with Uganda and the Imperial British East Africa Company—and previous to that with the punishment of the slave-raiders on Lake Nyassa—has pointed out some of the political dangers ahead. The want of guarantee of cohesion between the various nationalities represented in Freeland, and of assurance that the high aims and aspirations of the founder will not be used as a cloak for the particular schemes of any one of these nationalities, is one difficulty. Another is the extent to which Great Britain is pledged to protect the natives from attack or injury, and the uncertainty as to the attitude which this mixed community will assume towards the aborigines.

If the Freelanders select a well-populated country for their experiment, they will have either to buy out or drive out the rightful owners, and in the latter case somebody will have to interfere in the interests of justice and humanity. The somebody in such cases is usually poor, overburdened John Bull. Then, if the new colony is going to assume the functions of a state within a region supposed to be under British influence, awkward complications may easily arise.

"As regards the treatment of natives," says Captain Lugard, "the original intention of the expedition was to take with them a Maxim gun, and though this has been vetoed, they still take a quantity of spare breech-loading arms with which to arm some of the natives. This does not wholly tally with the peaceful and philanthropic views propounded by Dr. Hertzka under the declaration furnished by the Austrian Government to the expedition. . . . The scheme is at present subject to the autocratic rule of Dr. Hertzka, and so long as it remains thus under a responsible head we have less fear that the community may offer any opposition to the constituted authorities and laws and regulations in British East Africa. But it remains to be seen what guarantees to this effect will be given when the community becomes autonomous. Moreover, since its components are of various nationalities, speaking different languages, it is open to speculation whether the views of the various groups will be identical in these matters, and whether the cohesion and brotherhood which are anticipated by their founder will continue to pervade the whole colony."

This is one aspect of the enterprise—and an important one, it must be acknowledged—presented by a competent critic. In this consideration it is assumed that the country in view has all the attributes which Dr. Hertzka desires and supposes for his experiment. Although deemed a Socialistic one, it is repudiated by the Social-Democrats of the country of its inception, and perhaps it might be more accurately described as a co-operative enterprise. The members of the colony are to work at a common task, and all are to share in the common profit. The cultivators of the land are to pay no rent. Yet there is to be no private ownership in property.

It is proposed to make extensive use of machinery in order to replace individual labour as far as possible, and thereby increase the gross returns, but it is not very clear how the machinery is to be supplied, and to whom it will belong. How it is

to be conveyed through pathless regions into the heart of Africa is a problem of which we have seen no proposed solution.

But is the country what Dr. Hertzka supposes and expects? According to the experiences of the unfortunate Chanler expedition it is the very reverse—a region of absolute sterility, except on the slopes of Mount Kenia, between which and the Tana River is an intervening tract of sandy, waterless wastes. Dr. Hertzka believes in a high, fertile, uninhabited plateau on Mount Kenia. Lieutenant von Hohnel positively asserts that no such plateau exists.

Now, this is interesting, because Lieutenant von Hohnel, after his memorable journey with Count Teleki, when the new lakes Rudolf and Stefanie were discovered, has recently returned from a two years' wandering in this very region. He was, indeed, with the Chanler expedition, which proved such a failure. And Von Hohnel says:

"There are densely populated and fertile slopes on Mount Kenia, but no uninhabited plateau; and then the long, wide, barren, and waterless plain underneath, extending towards the also densely populated slopes of the Djambeni range on the north-west."

Dr. Hertzka's picture of a kingdom of nature's products, with an excellent climate, eternal spring, and extraordinary fertility, in the uninhabited highlands of Kenia, is characterised as "a dream—only a theorist's hallucination." Then the Tana River, up which the Freelanders are to push their way by steamer for three hundred and fifty miles, is now represented as a broad shallow stream, full of sandbanks and trees lying athwart the current, and without sufficient depth for a steamer of even shallow draught.

The river, in short, is not now navigable, according to Von Hohnel, and even if the plateau did exist at Kenia, the intervening route is impossible of transport, for it was there that the Chanler expedition utterly broke down. And Von Hohnel, it must be remembered, is no novice in travel. He did not attempt this expedition until he had made that journey with Teleki which proved his ability to overcome obstacles of the most stupendous character.

But assuming that the Freelanders do succeed where Chanler and Von Hohnel failed, and make their way without mishap by the route they have chosen to Mount Kenia—what then? This, according to the latest visitor: "Every square yard of this part of North-East Africa is densely populated wherever the land is productive and watered. The Djambeni range is thirty miles long and possesses twenty thousand inhabitants. The slopes of Mount Kenia have a large population, including the warlike tribes of the Kadseri and Kikuyu. If the Freeland colonists wish to settle on the base of Mount Kenia, then they must fight for the district they seize, and live afterwards within stockades and on the lookout."

And supposing they do succeed in settling under such very uncomfortable and hazardous circumstances, what are their business prospects?

According to Von Hohnel: "There can be no business future at all. The young fellows must live like peasants, living a healthy life as vegetarians. They may shoot big game at first, but rhinos and the like will soon leave the district, frightened by the white man. The idea of starting manufactures is a dream. Where are the means of transport, either to or from Mount Kenia and the sea-coast? Profit in North-East Africa lies in gold and wool, and so far as Count Teleki, Mr. Chanler, and myself could ascertain—unless, perhaps, in the Turkana district, south of Lake Rudolf—neither is to be found."

The soil, too, is said to be not really fertile, in the sense of the fertility of Borneo or Java, and it yields only one crop yearly of Indian corn, which is the staple food of the people. And to reach this dubious region it has been calculated that the first batch of pioneers will have to expend about five thousand pounds on porters and beasts of burden, and not less than four months of toil and struggle through the barren waste. At the end of June last news was received from the pioneer camp at Lamu, which up to the beginning of May had not received the promised pecuniary and other support from Europe. But for the energy and influence of Dr. Wilhelm, the leader, it is said, the initial expedition would have collapsed altogether. Three or four of the party were to be despatched from Lamu at the end of June in order to explore Mount Kenia up to the summit.

Such, then, is the grand scheme of the Freeland colony, and such are the opinions of it of those who are qualified to speak. The rest of us must be content to wait and watch for the results. The experiment is certainly a most interesting one, if it can only be carried out. But the probabilities are against it in every way; and one can sympathise with the blunt declaration of

the Vienna Socialists—that there is no necessity to go and begin life again, like so many Robinson Crusoes, in a desert African Freeland.

THE STORY OF A POSTCARD.

IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

Patsy, and Dolly, and Dick had applied privately to old Nurse Murdoch for information on the subject of governesses. They demanded to know what they were like. Nurse Murdoch had enlightened them with a gloomy shake of the head. She was not at all pleased at having her precious charges taken from her. She explained that all their good times were over; that they would have to sit upright at meal times, and not speak a word; that they would have to wear their best clothes every afternoon and betray no desire to romp in the hayfield; that they would have lessons and scales from morning till night.

Patsy, who was the eldest, and understood the horror of the picture that Nurse Murdoch had drawn more fully than any of the others, had burst into a storm of tears, and required to be comforted with some mysterious sweets known as "humbugs," which Nurse Murdoch kept always secreted about her person, ready for similar occasions. Many were the "humbugs" that were required before Miss Raymond came.

But Angela had now been at Thesiger Manor a week, and no such awful changes had occurred as the jealous old servant had foretold. Indeed, all her complainings were now turned the other way.

It had been difficult to keep Patsy and Dolly cool and clean and frilled before, but it was impossible now. Five pinafores a day, Nurse Murdoch said indignantly, would not keep them tidy. What with mushrooming in the morning, and blackberrying in the afternoon, and strawberrying at night, she should like to know the person as could keep them in frocks. And as for lessons, the new young lady might be pleasant spoke enough, but it seemed to her it was nothing but play from morning till night. Murdoch did not understand the kindergarten system, and it seemed to her that teaching geography by means of sewing green wool round maps of England, and arithmetic by counting how many strawberries you could eat at once, was a poor way of educating.

The children adored Angela, and openly and flagrantly neglected the faithful Murdoch for their new friend. It was only Thesiger, of all the household, who never caught a glimpse of Angela as her true self.

To him she was invariably reserved and silent. She avoided him when it was possible, ceased to speak if he entered a room, had no smiles or conversation for him. Thesiger, the soul of sociable good nature, was annoyed at this silent antagonism. He began to wonder if this girl, with the blackest of eyes and sweetest of voices, hated him. He determined to find out.

Accordingly when he came across her taking one of her usual morning strolls, with Patsy hanging on to one arm and Dolly on the other, and Dick walking backwards before her in order not to lose a word of her conversation, he opened the campaign.

"I am glad to see you are giving the chicks a holiday this lovely morning," he said pleasantly.

"We are not having a holiday. We are having lessons," explained Patsy with a chuckle of delight.

"Lessons?" said Thesiger, with a somewhat puzzled glance at Angela's demure face. "What kind of a lesson?"

"We guess how many apples she has in her basket, and then she tells us how many there really are, and then we add them together—and then we eat them," said Patsy.

"I wish I had been taught in that way when I was young," said Thesiger, smiling.

But Angela did not respond to his advances. She preserved a discreet silence, and had assumed a sedate air which she certainly had not worn before.

Thesiger despatched the children on in front to gather flowers, and then turned to Angela.

"I wonder why you are always so very stiff to me, Miss Raymond?" he began, going straight to the heart of the subject according to his invariable custom. "I don't think you have spoken to me of your own accord since you came."

"I am very stupid at making conversation," said Angela calmly.

"I don't want you to make conversation," said Thesiger in rather a vexed voice. "I only want you to treat me as an ordinary human being."

"I haven't anything to talk about."

"You talk fast enough to the children," said Thesiger.

"Too much?"

"Of course not. What an absurd idea!"

"I am only anxious to give satisfaction," said Angela primly.

"I am delighted with the progress the children have made," said Thesiger; "but is there any reason why you should not treat their father as a friend?"

"None at all. Only I know that governesses ought to keep in the background, and I mean to do it. Theodosia impressed that fact well into my mind before I came. This is the first time I have tried my hand at this sort of thing, you know, so I have to be careful. What made you have me, by the way?"

"Because I liked your postcard," said Thesiger promptly. "There was something original about it—and mischievous. But I haven't seen your real self since you came."

"Governesses ought to sink their identity in that of their charges," said Angela. "Theodosia told me so."

"Do you think this immense sense of duty will prevent you from accompanying Patsy to the drawing-room in the evening, and favouring me with some of your delightful music?"

Angela reflected.

"I don't know," she replied dubiously. "What do you think?"

"I think it is quite consistent with your dignity to do so," said Thesiger lightly.

"You really do? I'll come, then. It is rather dull in the schoolroom when Dick and Dolly are gone to bed. Patsy and I will come in to-night in our best frocks."

Thesiger glanced at the blooming face at his side. He wondered for a moment if he were putting himself into danger by allowing this girl's life to come any nearer to his own, but he finally decided that he was too old to fall in love again, and that there was no reason why he should lead a lonelier life than was necessary.

Angela and Patsy came in that night after dinner. The former went straight to the piano and played it from the moment she entered the room to the moment she left it. Thesiger had not a word with her. Patsy, very clean, and starched and frilled, chattered away to her heart's content. Thesiger expected her to burst into tears when she was borne off to bed; but she went like a lamb at Nurse Murdoch's call, and Angela followed her at once.

A week later Angela took the children for a picnic. The weather was glorious, the sky cloudless, the air warm. Thesiger met her in the hall with an enormous basket on her arm, and asked her where she was going.

"I am going for a picnic," said Angela, in her most child-like manner. "It is my birthday."

"Many happy returns of it, then. May I come too?"

"I don't think you would enjoy it," said Miss Raymond doubtfully. "We don't mind spiders and earwigs in our tea; but I should fancy that you would object."

"Not at all. They lend a most delicate flavour——"

"And you would have to carry heavy baskets, and wash up in the stream," pursued Angela, heedless of the flippant interruption, "and I don't believe we have enough for you to eat."

"Do let me come. I have a most fairy-like appetite."

"Would you make a fire for us?" said Angela, pondering.

"Anything you like to order me to do I will. It is years since I was at a picnic."

"Then you may come," said Angela, transferring her basket from her own arm to his, "and if you come home hot, and tired, and cross, it will not be my fault."

"I shall not be either. I mean to enjoy it."

And enjoy it he certainly did.

What did it matter if the buns were sugary and hot, or that the butter had melted in the sun? What did it matter that it took half an hour to collect the sticks for the fire, while Angela sat cool and smiling under the shade of her white parasol watching him at work? What did anything matter when the sky was so blue, the trees so green, the air so fresh—and the girl before him so beautiful? Thesiger never enjoyed a picnic so much as he enjoyed this one.

He threw himself on the ground at last with an exhausted air, and drew out his cigar-case. Patsy, and Dick, and Dolly scampered off into the wood. Thesiger and Angela were left alone.

"You must wash up now," said Angela, with a glance at the recumbent figure.

"What a slave-driver you are, Miss Raymond. May I not have a few moments of repose?"

"I will allow you ten minutes," said Angela with a glance at her watch, "and then you must begin. That is what I let you come for. I hate washing up, and it is not compatible with my ideas of conscience to allow the children to smash your china."

Thesiger rolled over on to his back, and gazed up into the blue sky.

"Don't you find life very dull here?" he demanded after a pause.

"No. I am absorbed in the children," said Miss Raymond with an elderly air.

"But in the evenings—when the children don't absorb you. Isn't it dull then?"

"I study, and improve my mind."

Thesiger was silent for awhile. Then he demanded:

"When did you meet Gerty?"

"Gerty?"

"My sister, Lady Devereux. She and you are great friends, I believe."

"Yes. We used to see a good deal of each other at one time. I often stayed with Lady Devereux," said Angela slowly.

Thesiger turned his head to look at her. He wanted to know if her face was changed as well as her voice. The voice had been cold and hard; the face was cold and hard too.

"Do you never stay with Gerty now?"

"No, never."

"Why not?"

"It is always a mistake to go back to places where one has once been very happy."

Her tone was almost bitter. Thesiger glanced at her again in surprise.

"Are you happy no longer?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, in a vegetable sort of way," said Angela, shaking off her unusual mood and making an effort to regain her ordinary manner; "but I was actively happy there, and that makes all the difference."

"Naturally."

He could think of nothing else to say. She went on:

"You see, that was five years ago, and that makes a great deal of difference too. I have settled down now. I hadn't then."

"Don't you ever mean to marry," said Thesiger, with what he flattered himself was entirely impersonal curiosity.

"No," said Angela firmly. "I do not. I tried being engaged and I didn't like it, so I broke it off."

"Poor wretch! Was he good-looking?" asked her companion with a jealousy that he again mistook for curiosity.

"He had a cast in his eye, and he was very warm-hearted—two things that I detest."

Thesiger wondered whether he was too warm-hearted or not.

"How are you going to end?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Angela gravely, "but I have always had a fancy for almshouses. I should like to live in one with white shells round the porch and geraniums in the window. I shall probably take snuff."

"Of course all that is nonsense," said Thesiger; "you are certain to marry."

"Well, I dare say you know best," said Miss Raymond, with a slight yawn.

Thesiger coloured.

"I suppose you think I am very impertinent. But I can't help thinking that the true Prince Charming hasn't arrived yet."

"It is time for you to take the tea-cups down to the stream," announced Angela in her most business-like tone. "Be sure you are careful with the spoons. Nurse Murdoch impressed upon me that if I came home with one short I should probably be turned out of the house."

Lyon Thesiger laughed, but he obeyed her meekly enough, and went off with his load to the stream. Angela leaned back against a tree and watched him.

What had made him so suddenly refer to her friendship with Lady Devereux? How much did he know? What did he suspect? How foolish she had been to allow him to suppose that there was anything to suspect! But she had been unable to keep the bitterness wholly out of her tone and manner. Thesiger had made the dry bones rattle. How well she remembered the time that she had spoken of—the happy time before her father had lost his money, when the world was delightful, and the future stretched brightly before her. If any one had then told her that she would ever become governess to the children of Gertrude Devereux's brother, how she would have laughed them to scorn.

She had departed for that visit the happiest, most light-hearted girl in the world; she returned a changed being. Not that outwardly there was much difference—Theodosia, for instance, had never been able to detect any—but her light-heartedness had become cynical, her conversation flippant, her real happiness gone, and only a mask in its place. And yet there was nothing for the world to take hold of and make a story out of.

If Sir Robert Devereux's brother had paid her marked attention, had not other men paid her marked attention also? Was not every one in the house at her feet? If he gave her flowers, bought her songs, whispered words of praise in her ears, so did half-a-dozen others. But there was just this difference with him. The half-dozen others did not matter—they might have been so many flies buzzing round her for all she cared—but he, and he alone, had power to move her. His voice could bring the blood to her cheek, the light to her eye. His glance could make her heart beat fast. In short, she loved him.

Everybody had prophesied that it would be a match. Angela herself thought so.

His every word, every look told her that she was all the world to him.

Gertrude had been displeased at the idea of the marriage—she knew that, and had laughed at it. She felt secure in her lover. He had almost gone to the point of telling her that she was his idol.

Then, suddenly, without reason, all was changed. His attentions cooled, his glance rested indifferently on her, his words were no longer in the veiled language of love. He came down one morning and announced that he was going away, and said good-bye to Angela before them all with an unfaltering voice. She had borne herself bravely, but she felt as though she had been publicly jilted. Too proud to seek for an explanation from a man who was not openly engaged to her, Angela played her part so well that no one suspected the real truth. The general opinion was that she had refused Bernard Devereux, and that he had gone off on account of this disappointment.

Only Gertrude Devereux knew differently.

She hung about Angela in a somewhat guilty fashion after her brother-in-law's departure. She tried to find out if the wound were deep, but Angela fenced so well and talked so gaily, that she decided, with a sigh of relief, that there had not been so much harm done after all. She would have been sorry for Angela to be unhappy, but, after all, Bernard was the future baronet, as she had no children of her own, and she wished him to do better than marry Angela Raymond. She would have been both surprised and grieved if she had known that Angela Raymond was thinking about him still.

He was very vividly before Angela's mind as she sat there watching Thesiger's efforts to fish tea-cups out of the stream. The very tone of his voice, the touch of his hand, the look of his eyes were acutely present to her. She had tried to forget him; she had tried to marry another man; she had scolded herself severely for still caring for a man who could treat her so heartlessly. But it was of no avail. Alone with herself she could maintain her attitude of dignity no longer. Despise herself she did profoundly, but she knew that to the end of her days she should still retain her early fancy for Bernard Devereux.

The voices of Patsy, and Dick, and Dolly aroused her from her reverie. They had come to "help poor papa," they announced, and a violent altercation was arising between themselves and their honoured parent on the subject of teaspoons. Thesiger had carefully washed them and laid them aside. Dick had dropped them in the stream again because he said they were sticky. Thesiger felt the imputation cast on his character as a washer-up keenly. Besides, the stream was deep, and the spoons sank naturally to the bottom.

Angela came smiling to the rescue. As she tucked up her sleeve to fish them up again, Thesiger noticed that she had a very lovely arm.

He went home in a thoughtful mood.

Now Publishing,

THE

EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER

CONTAINING

Complete Stories by Popular Writers.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.

Next Month will be published the OPENING CHAPTERS of

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS,

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc. etc.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 291.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 28, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLIX. BOUND TO EACH OTHER.

PENELOPE hated the black crape which they made her wear. Every day she found it more difficult to put it on. She would not wear a widow's cap. No one saw her but her uncle and the servants, so no one was shocked. For a few days she struggled against the feeling, but one morning she crept down to breakfast with her uncle. It was the first time since that great shock had occurred in their daily lives that she had left her room.

"Welcome, my child," he said, coming to meet her with something sweeter—or so it seemed to her—added to his old love, "welcome, Princess."

The Duke spoke thus, not only because of his love for her—after his fashion that love had never failed—but because the girl was suddenly transformed into a new being, and he saw it. She reminded him of that good time they had enjoyed in London. He fancied that he was watching her enter the drawing-rooms of the great people, who prided themselves on their rank and on their perfect "savoir faire," a gift Penelope had by nature, having no need to learn it.

To-day she looked regal, and as she came towards the breakfast-table her eyes fell on a letter. It was for her, and she knew the handwriting. She opened it slowly and read the few words it contained, then she said:

"Uncle, Forster Bethune is coming back. He will be here to-day. You must send the carriage to meet him."

"Poor fellow!" said the Duke.

Then he paused. Penelope had a strange power over people's words. She compelled them to respect her wishes, even her unspoken wishes.

"He does not bring Dora?"

"Dora! Oh, no."

Then Penelope sat down, and Nero walked in and fawned upon her. Something joyous was in the room, invisible though it might be.

"Tell them to have his old room ready, uncle," she said, when breakfast was over.

He was going to answer: "You can see to that," but stopped short. He remembered certain signs he had seen, and certain floating ideas that had crossed his brain, and he was silent.

"I forget the child is a widow. Ah! well, it might be a very suitable way out of many difficulties, now that money is of no consequence."

Sorrow seldom visited him, and he obeyed the injunctions of the Princess with a new feeling of pleasure. Penelope, however, went about with even a lighter step than his, and she had a smile on her lips which she forced back before the servants. But she did not visit the glen this afternoon; only when it was getting dusk, and it was time for the carriage to return, she went upstairs, and taking down her new black dress, she deliberately cut the threads which held the crape and wrenched it off.

"There! It is a hateful mockery," she said, and, putting on the dress, she went downstairs.

Forster would not notice this omission, but it would comfort her to know the crape was not there.

Then she went down to the hall, where she had ordered a great fire to be lighted. She insisted on quite an illumination, for she wanted to drive away the gloom

which persistently hung over the Palace. When all was quiet she opened a small casement in the hall, and stood listening in the twilight for the sound of wheels. Her heart beat fast, but no outward sign of excitement was visible.

The Duke was in his study, and only Nero kept close to her, growling in a low voice when he heard faint, distant noises.

At last the sound was audible, but it was still some way off. The carriage was coming back, and Forster would be in it. She closed the window and went to the drawing-room.

Here all the windows were curtained, and everything looked comfortable; beauty and luxury were visible, and added to them was the sweet aroma of a woman's life, an atmosphere which is felt but which cannot be described, and which emanates from the spirit of a woman who loves.

Penelope looked round, and saw that all was perfect; then she glanced at a mirror, and saw that she was herself beautiful. The girl whom Philip had seen here, in this very room, on the first occasion of his arrival, was not then aware that she was in any way unusual, but since then she had learnt many things, and she had learnt that she was beautiful.

The wheels stopped, she heard her uncle's voice, and she heard Forster answering him. She could not go out to him, something prevented her, but, stooping, she lifted a pine log and threw it on the fire. The flames leapt up, and as the door opened Forster, coming as he did from the gloomy twilight, beheld her surrounded with a great golden light, weird but exceedingly beautiful. She raised herself and held out her hand, but her lips refused to speak. Happily the Duke was there.

"So glad to see you, Bethune, so very glad, but you look wretchedly ill again! You must remain here till you are strong. This air worked wonders for you before, if I am not mistaken."

"I have had another touch of African fever. I—I shall get well, I am better. One must fight against these attacks."

"You will get well here," echoed Penelope, because she knew she must say something.

"I have only come to—to——"

The Duke left the room, and Forster sank into a chair, for the Princess was already seated by the tea-table. She was bending over the quaint old silver tea-pot, which he and Dora had one day so much admired. The whole scene was familiar and soothing, but, as he saw the Duke depart, he repeated:

"I have only come to answer your note."

"I wanted you to come."

"I thought, I thought—but Williams has told me that there is nothing new."

Penelope did not answer. She rose and brought him his tea, and all around her was wafted a strong inexplicable personality, but Forster, though he noticed it, was strong enough to repel its influence.

He took his tea from her in silence, though he could not help noticing a new graciousness in her movements, an unconscious freedom from restraint which she did not before possess.

She sat down in the carved chair, and looked at the dancing flame. Something was dancing in her heart. Forster was here, he was in the same room as herself, all else was swept away. It had been buried during those long hours passed alone since he had left her. Silence contented her; he was here, and she had torn off that hateful crape.

"I have come," he said when the silence had lasted some time—neither of them could have said how long—"I have come to see how I could help you, for—for his sake."

Penelope moved her foot impatiently.

"I wanted you to come," she repeated, and there was another silence.

When Forster spoke again he stood up, and moved away from the easy arm-chair. He was stronger, more himself in this attitude. He had not come to enjoy silence but to speak, otherwise he would not have left Dora's cry unheeded—this was what he said to himself.

"When I left you, you know it was to take away Dora. I did not want her to be here, this was not the place for that child; but I said then that I was coming back. I meant to come back at once to help you, and to help you to hope till—till hope was impossible—but we are not masters of our actions. I fell ill; Adela wrote and told you so."

"Yes."

"I had much time for thought then, Penelope, and I resolved upon many things. I tried to—to shape my life again."

"Yes, one must shape one's life again."

"The other had all been a mistake, a great mistake."

"Yes, a great mistake."

"And we must face it. It is cowardly of me to have thought that you could face it alone. It was my duty to come back so that we may face it together."

"Oh, yes," answered Penelope, starting up, and for the first time throwing off the strong restraint she had put upon herself. "That is also what I wanted; I wanted you to come so that we might face it together. Forster, we must, we may now."

She spoke almost under her breath, and the sudden softness unnerved him.

"What do you mean?"

"Why do you ask? Have I ever been false, or hidden anything? I never was to him. Now that we cannot undo the past we must look forward. Life need not be a shipwreck. Oh! Forster, you blame yourself—and I think you blame me, but you need not do so; you know all my story. I was ignorant till I saw you, I did not know what life meant, I was not alive. I did not know what love meant."

She had made the plunge now, and the sound of the word gave her strength.

"Neither did you," she added after a slight pause.

"Good heavens, no," said Forster, "and I—I cast myself into a burning volcano."

"Oh, no, no, one can't help it. I did not know it till it came—now I know all. I can see how foolish I was, how wrong my uncle was. But, Forster, don't think hardly of him; there was some excuse for him I don't believe, no, I am sure of it, I don't believe he has ever loved any one but me, and—even before me—the honour of our house. Look how he has been tried in his tenderest feelings, remember how we sank till——"

"Nonsense," said Forster sternly, the sophistry of the whole argument coming painfully upon him. "You have believed all this—this rubbish so long that you fancy it is true. What family honour was worth that? Oh! Penelope, Philip was worth more than all the honour of the Winskells. Don't I know it? Haven't we spent days, months, together in one work, sharing the same interests, thinking the same thoughts? And now! No, I have not come here to face life together as you think, but to tell you that we must face it apart. I loved you. Yes, I know it, I confess it. I betrayed my friend, and now that the way is free, do you want me to step in and take advantage of that? Don't you understand what I feel, I, who did love Philip?"

His anger was roused, and he looked very handsome standing there with his arms folded upon the top of a chair, leaning forward a little in his excitement. He was once again the master, the leader of others—not because he was imperious, but because of his mysterious influence over them.

Penelope was proud of him now. Here was the man she loved, stronger and more powerful than herself or than any Winskell.

"Yes, I understand," she said, without seeming to notice his anger; "but, Forster, you—you loved me too, you showed it. You—you said so as plainly as a man may say it. Why should you blot out the past? Haven't I any regrets? Are the dead to conquer everything? Are mistakes to have no righting because, because——"

She came and stood close beside him.

"You have been ill, Forster, but so have I, not outwardly, but I have gone through a valley of death. I am not the old Penelope, but I—I cannot be left alone. I can't. You thought of it when to the world we must have seemed as traitors; now, now—there will be no one to blame us, no one. Oh! That has helped me to be brave. You will not suffer through me now, you, so good and brave, no stone will be thrown at you now because of me."

All at once Forster saw what must be seen once, if not many times, by fallen human beings, that sin and the sinner never stand alone. If man could fall and rise alone, then the fall and the rising would be far easier. The law of consequences is the law that has made men who are strong, strong even in their religious belief, fall very low—the law that has wrecked as many as it has saved, the law that uses our sweet sympathy to bring about our ruin, and with it the ruin of those we love.

What Penelope said was true. He had consented when all was against him; had he the right now, when the woman he loved would not suffer in the sight of men, and when he himself would bring no disgrace upon others—had he the right to ease his own conscience by a self-sacrifice that would save his own soul, but which might ruin her whole life?

This was the question which at this moment flashed itself with awful clearness upon his brain. The flames round the pine logs once more flared up as they licked the dry wood, forcing the resin from its cells by the power of their fierce embrace.

Forster saw his position, and suddenly he straightened himself as if he had been turned to stone. Where was his right to please himself? Who had given it to him?

Had he not resigned it when he had clasped the soft hands of a woman, and looked at the beautiful eyes with a covetous desire?

A voice seemed clearly to mock him with the answer: "You have not the right; you belong to her. She is the master now, you have but to obey."

If Penelope had moved one inch nearer to him, if she had placed one light hand upon his arm, his fierce anger might have burst forth again, but she stood close beside him without moving, almost without breathing. She, the proud Princess, who had once scorned all men, was there, beautiful as ever—nay, far more beautiful because more human, more passionate, more loving—but she stood beside him as a slave might do, the personification of woman's weakness, that weakness which is her strongest claim upon man's great sympathy. It was this which conquered him: not her love, not her pride, not her passion, but that strong, new, rare virtue in her, her humility.

There followed a long pause, a long silence, an eternity of nothingness to one of them; then, slowly, very slowly, Forster's arm was stretched out and he drew her towards himself.

"You are right," he said, in a voice from whence all hope had fled. "I am bound to you, Penelope. I thought otherwise, but—but——"

She gently laid her head on his shoulder.

"Oh, Forster, we are bound to each other."

The Duke's step was heard. Penelope slowly released herself, but Forster still stood there motionless.

CHAPTER L. A CALL TO FOLLOW.

The wind came sweeping down the valley with that peculiarly long, sobbing wail which seldom fails to call forth a feeling of sadness in those whose finer natures sympathise with earth's many voices. To them it seems as if the curse had fallen on the winds of heaven when earth received its doom from its Creator, bidding it bring forth in sorrow.

In the lonely Rothery glen all sounds seemed to live and to have a separate existence, and not merely to be the result of known laws.

The moon was at the full, and as dark clouds were driven across her hard, unsympathetic face, the lights and shadows varied in strange succession.

To-night it seemed as if some mysterious influence was abroad, and that the spirit of evil was seeking for souls. Forster was not dreaming of going to bed. Weary and spent as he was, he could not rest. He looked round the place and noted, as men often do note, even when most disturbed in spirit, the signs of wealth and comfort about his bedroom. He even noticed the unmistakable signs of a woman's hand, and he knew it was Penelope who had thought of all his wants.

He still felt stunned, though his brain was on fire; the horror of the whole episode was still upon him. Would it ever wear off? He doubted it.

He seemed to be acting in a scene which had already taken place in the past. Surely he had passed through all this before, and this second time he had been conquered and had fallen in the fight. Not willingly, but because circumstances had been too powerful for him, who had never before paused if the wrong had to be righted or if oppression had to be forcibly put down.

But to-night he had fallen, not from the height of virtue, but from the lowest foothold of principle, to which he had clung with the desperation of a man who feels himself falling down a precipice.

And now he still felt numbed, and all the noblest part of his nature seemed dead. In his own estimation he had reached the lowest depth, he could neither fall lower nor rise again. He would marry the woman he had coveted, he would be her master. He had conquered her proud spirit, and in the future there would be no more struggle, she was his willing slave. She, "a Princess king-descended," was his. He had thought of her as of an ideal woman, and he had found that the ideal woman had crushed his noblest nature. He was both conqueror and conquered; all that was best of him now discerned that he was bound to her, that, coward as he was, he would be a craven to forsake her. She had forged chains of iron strength with gossamer threads.

As he paced his room his vision seemed to become clearer and clearer. He saw himself outside himself, and turned the full light of his clear knowledge upon the Forster who had fallen. He recognised fully all the great and noble possibilities that had been; that were still, in a way, his. He knew that his aim had been higher than the aims of other men, and that his purity was more worthy that title than that of thousands of his fellow-creatures. It was

from no vanity nor pride that this was so plain to his mental vision, but from the knowledge that he had always interpreted the great battle-cry of Christianity in its fullest and most literal sense.

It is not the sin which invariably makes men sad or sorry, it is the knowledge of it, and Forster had realised this.

He went to the window and looked out, striving to snatch comfort from without, but there was none.

He remained there, gazing at the fitful lights and shades, wondering if one could ever snatch back lost purity just as moonlight will again flood a shadowed corner.

Then the name of God came to his lips, and he repeated it in a whisper.

God — what did that word imply? Something above him, something too awful to invoke when sin is near.

In his happy days Forster had believed in the union of man's soul with his Creator. He had talked of the love that had made man and God as it were one, but now that doctrine seemed to mock him, for how could he claim so close a relationship with One who had formed him for holiness?

"God!" he repeated, and the word seemed empty of all meaning.

The owls hooted in the near trees, and a night bird flew heavily across the plane of the moon's light.

"The evil one," he whispered, gazing across the courtyard, fascinated by the sight of a dark figure moving slowly and stealthily close along the wall.

Suddenly Forster laughed a little low laugh.

"It is the King," he thought. "Not a bad type of him, that other evil one. That at least is true, there is a spirit of evil. He is real, very real, he lies in wait for us—he is very real; but is God stronger—God—so far above us—so immeasurably divided from us, from me? Which of the two is the conqueror, God or the devil?"

And again one of those moments of horror unspeakable took possession of him, and he remained still as death whilst the fierce battle raged within his soul.

An hour, two hours passed, he knew not which. Even those who have engaged in close conflict with evil, and who with the sword of a Michael have victoriously driven the dragon from the vantage ground of their powerful holiness which he sought to occupy in their soul, have been loth to reveal the particulars of that fierce fight; but those who have been overtaken in sleep and have had to rise with no armour and with but a broken sword to fight the archfiend, have never dared to reveal whether the result has been victory or abject defeat. Terrible is that struggle. Good angels can never know the nature of it, for the weight of sin is a burden peculiar to man.

In the fiercest part of the conflict, a sudden ray of moonlight pierced the chamber and flooded it with unearthly brightness. Then, stretching out his arms, Forster fell on his knees and cried:

"O Christ, hear me."

The God-man, He must understand and He must stretch out His hand to help the sinner overwhelmed by his sin; if not, Forster Bethune felt that he must perish.

He felt that the evil one was conquering, he knew that no certainty of new strength had come to him, but rather that it was ebbing fast away. He knew that he should stay here in this house of luxury, and that she, his evil star, would bind him to herself, and love him to his eternal shame. He knew it, it must be so unless some divine hand were stretched to him.

"O Christ, save me, I am sinking," he cried aloud, and the old walls seemed very, very faintly to answer "He is sinking." But to his inner consciousness there came no answer from Christ, only a mocking fiend answered:

"Why cry aloud for help? There is no help. Your own noble manhood ties you down to her; you are bound to her, and she is bound to you."

"If that is so," answered Forster, sinking down, "if that is so, if I have doomed myself—for I did it myself—then, then my struggles are useless, I am mocking God."

"Mocking God," said the soundless echo.

"Then if I can do nothing of myself, O Christ, have pity on a lost soul."

"A lost soul," repeated the echo.

All the horror, the anguish of this struggle, added to the weakness of his bodily frame, fell on the soul of Forster Bethune at this moment. He tried to struggle to his feet, for again his eyes caught sight of a moving figure returning by the way it had come, but this time it was not alone. As Forster's strained eyeballs gazed before him he saw another figure, a tall woman's form wrapped in a black cloak, and a very beautiful face was turned towards him. At this moment it seemed that she was in the power of the evil one, and that both were beckoning to him to follow them. Was this the only answer to his prayer? Was all the help he would receive

to come from the evil one, was his destination a hell to which a beautiful woman beckoned him, a hell whose path was paved with all the good intentions of his former life?

He opened his lips for one more call for help, but no word came from them. The struggle had been so fierce that it was followed by a state of unconsciousness.

When he came to himself the fire had burnt low, and he felt chilled to the bone. His mind remained for some few moments a blank. Then, suddenly, thought flew back to its accustomed haunts, and the machinery of the tired mind began slowly to revolve. But the power of suffering seemed gone. He was as one who, after suffering acute pain, is suddenly eased and hardly understands the reason of his relief. He rose slowly and went towards the fire, threw on a log of wood, and watched it slowly ignite. He looked at his watch and saw that it was three o'clock. A chill, dreary look was over all the glen, and a kind of dull feeling of nothingness came over him, till all at once the image of Dora flashed upon his memory, and once more he heard her pathetic entreaty to him to stay.

"'Lead us not into temptation,'" he repeated. "Ah, that was my last chance, and I put it away from me. I alone am the author of my own undoing; there is no such thing as fate—man is the worker-out of his own final destiny."

Not in uttered words but as a mental picture these thoughts presented themselves, and he knew they were true; but what surprised him was, that the fearful struggle he had gone through, though still present to him, had lost its bitterness. Some strange power, and he could not explain it, had soothed his brain and calmed his overwrought nerves. He was now like a condemned man, who, at last calmly accepting his fate and knowing that he must die, yet feels that death may not be the end of all things, but rather the door which an invisible hand has very slightly opened, allowing a bright beam of light to shine through it, assuring him that there is light beyond. He must not be ill here, however, so he had better try to go to bed and rest a little. He must not give up all hope, for life was still his own, and on life God had set the seal of hope, otherwise man could not exist for an hour.

He rose slowly and stood against the mantelpiece, in the same strange, listless mood which now seemed to possess him.

All at once he heard the distant sound of a footstep down the long passage; it was a woman's footstep, and the recollection of the ghost came over him, but he experienced not the slightest fear, barely any curiosity, though the sound was so distinct.

He listened, however, very attentively, then he heard the steps pass his door and go on a little way. Again the sound stopped for a few seconds, and the footsteps returned and once more passed his door. This time he heard the soft, sweeping sound of a woman's skirts. On and on they went—again the pause, and again the return journey. He drew nearer now to the door and listened, for the footsteps were beginning to irritate his worn nerves. Who was it? Was it a supernatural being, or was it—was it——?

If they came again he would open the door and look out, but a strange disinclination to do this kept him motionless.

The pause this time was longer than before, and he almost fancied the steps were gone and would not return; but no, still they were slowly coming on, and to his excited imagination there was something supernatural in them. At some moments he fancied they were Penelope's footsteps, but at others they seemed a quicker, more excited tread than hers ever were.

At last he could bear it no longer. He walked firmly to the door, and placed his hand upon the handle. He listened again, but the steps had stopped suddenly, they must have stopped just opposite his doorway. For one moment Forster thought, "Am I so utterly unmanned that I am afraid to open?" Then, angry at the very idea, he turned the handle and flung open the door.

Opposite to him was a tall figure enveloped in a long black cloak. The passage was darker than his room, and for the first moment he could see only the form. Then the light from his own candle steadied itself, for the draught had wafted it backward and forward, and it fell on the utterly white face of Penelope. But was it she? Or was it the proud great-aunt come back to upbraid him? Was this motionless person, whose bloodless face and startled eyes horrified him, was this Penelope, the woman who only last evening had laid a warm, blushing face upon his shoulder? No, it was not possible.

"What, what——?" he began, but stopped short.

"You are up, and you are awake," said the ghost of Penelope; "I am very thankful."

"Penelope, is it you, really you?" he said sternly. "What are you doing here? You must not come here. Don't you fear some——? For Heaven's sake go back to your own room!"

She raised herself to her full height as if scorning his fears, and he, seeing the look, regretted his words.

"We must remember what people will think," he added.

"If you are afraid," she said in a strange, scornful voice, "come out in the glen. No one will see us there; no one will hear us. Come now. I must speak to you at once, and once for all."

Again Forster felt that he must obey her, and, as she turned and walked silently down the wide oak staircase, he followed her.

DOWN AT THE SALT WATER.

A COMPLETE STORY.

A HIGH rocky point on the wooded bluff bordering the wide St. Lawrence, and two figures seated thereon, facing the sunset which had painted sky and river with the most gorgeous colours in its palette.

"It grows chilly already in the evenings," remarked the young lady, and her companion handed over to her the scarlet shawl he had been carrying. Then, regardless of his spotless white flannels, he stretched himself out upon the pine needles at her feet and looked at her instead of the sunset, a different style of picture but not a less attractive one. She, too, was in white flannel, and wore a little cap of the same above the fluffy mass of short black hair which gave the needed breadth to her somewhat narrow face. The brown eyes, which gazed so steadily across at the deepening shades of sky and river, were not quite happy in their expression, nor was the small mouth with its downward curve at the corners. Her complexion was naturally so dark that the sun had had little effect upon it, but the youth at her feet, who had evidently once been fair, was burned a handsome brown, his face a shade darker than the fair hair showing beneath his tennis cap.

"I could hardly believe my luck when I saw you arrive the other day," he said. "You see, I didn't know your sister's name, and the news that Mrs. Sheyn from Ottawa and her sister were expected at the hotel, meant nothing to me."

"I suppose you thought 'There will be two more for me to wait upon.' You seem to make yourself pretty generally useful."

"What's a fellow to do with himself down here if he doesn't? The ladies are so much in the majority, it is well to keep on the right side of them."

"I'd be very sorry to be dependent on the good graces of any one of them. They take as a matter of course all the attention the men pay them, and criticise them behind their backs."

"Well, let them!" laughed the young man. "Two can play at that game. We often have a little gossip ourselves over our cigars on the back gallery."

"I think this was a dreadful place to come to. I wonder how ever my sister happened to fix upon it. I suppose she thought it fashionable, but it isn't even that."

"You like the north shore better?"

"It is prettier certainly, more wild and romantic. I love the mountains at Murray Bay. This south side is as flat as it can be, except just here next the river."

"You don't get sunsets like that on the north shore."

"They are the best thing about the south shore. This place is neither gay enough to be lively, nor quiet enough to be rustic. There's no freedom."

"Why, it seems to me one can do pretty much as one pleases."

"Perhaps, if you're a man. You don't realise the amount of pettiness and snobbery there is among the women though. I've not been much in society, as you know, and this place seems insufferable to me."

"You are too severe, Miss Laura. I am sure you will like it better when you have been here a little longer."

Her glance fell from the distant horizon to the level of his face, and a shadow of injured feeling in his blue eyes brought the lacking bit of colour to her cheek.

"Perhaps I shall," she said softly.

"Laura!" exclaimed a commanding voice from behind, and the youth sprang to his feet.

"I am surprised at your sitting on the rocks in the evening."

The girl's face turned a deeper red.

"Allow me to introduce Mr. Armstrong from Montreal," she said.

The tall, stout brunette, in whose face Laura's slightly aquiline nose was intensified into a very decided Roman, and Laura's

pensive mouth into a determined-looking feature upheld by a substantial chin, bowed in a condescending manner, and remarked:

"My sister does not take long to make acquaintances."

"I am hardly a new one, Mrs. Sheyn. I met Miss Somerville in town last winter."

"Oh, indeed! Then you know her old school friends the Wardlaws?"

"No, I do not. In fact, our introduction was quite informal," he went on, in spite of a warning look from Laura. "I had the good fortune to save your sister from an accident on the Montreal Slide, and we met afterwards at a ball at the Windsor."

"Don't you think it is time we were going home?" said Laura.

"Quite time," replied the elder sister emphatically. "Good evening, Mr. Armstrong."

The young gentleman took a short cut down from the point, and when he was beyond ear-shot, Mrs. Sheyn, with broad, black brows meeting in a frown on her forehead, turned on her sister, who was silently following her down the narrow path bordered by scrubby bushes that made Indian file imperative.

"What do you know about this young man with whom I find you so very thick?"

"I only know that he is a gentleman."

"What does he do, and who are his people in Montreal?"

"How should I know?" replied the young girl pettishly. "You can get all the information you want, and more, too, from the ladies at the hotel."

"Going to gather balsam for a pine pillow, Miss Laura? Let me come too and help you." And, throwing down his racket, Jack Armstrong leapt the tennis net and forthwith appropriated the young lady and her basket. Strange to say, on the return after a long morning in the woods, they had gathered less than some of the young people who had worked single-handed. Their geological researches did not appear to have been much more fruitful, though very fatiguing, and the excuse for long rests in sunny sheltered nooks of the rocks along shore. A flicker of Laura's scarlet shawl would often indicate to Mrs. Sheyn the whereabouts of the pair, and for a while she made it her sisterly duty to break up the tête-à-têtes.

She was a very imposing lady, Mrs. Sheyn, and a few carefully-worded remarks sown in good soil concerning her invitations to Rideau Hall, her father who had been in the Service, and her husband, a broker, "so tied to business," had brought forth a speedy harvest in her admission to the most exclusive circle of matrons at the hotel. Finding that they all held Mr. Armstrong in the highest esteem, her aristocratic anxiety was lulled, and she contentedly exchanged her beach rambles for crochet work on one of the gallery rocking-chairs.

The salt air was doing wonders for Laura, so bright had she grown, her face almost rosy. Jack's buoyancy seemed to have infected her, and now, instead of resenting it, she rejoiced in his popularity, in the way he was implored to sing, and the reputation he had for being the best canoeist, swimmer, and cricketer at the hotel. Old Mr. Hatch, president of the Colonial Bank, was one of the many who took a fancy to him, enjoying nothing more than a walk along the road, or a game of bowls with "the young man called John," as he had christened him.

The whole hotel went a-picnicking to Mount Misery—not a cheerful name, but the company belied it. Such a singing of college songs, a rattling of pans, a blowing of tin horns, a waving of green branches stuck through the side bars of the two-wheeled hay-carts, never was heard or seen. The elderly and the dignified people went on ahead in one-horse vehicles with springs, but the young and frivolous needed none. They jolted along in the carts, the Canadian horses rattling at full speed down each long hill to gain impetus to carry them halfway up the next slope.

"Are you not coming, Mr. Armstrong?" called out Laura Somerville from the middle of one of the last hay-carts, which stood at the hotel door waiting for the tardiest passengers to embark.

"There's no room in this cart," said the young lady next to her.

"Nor in this!" "Nor in this!" came from two of the other vehicles as the horses set off at a good pace to catch up to those in front. A hay-cart had always been known to hold "just one more," at least, when Jack Armstrong was the one in question.

"Perhaps I can get on here," he said, going round to the front of that in which Laura was seated.

"That is Mr. Willoughby's place. We're waiting for him," said the pert miss whose feet were hanging over the other side, and all Jack's sunburn could not hide his heightened colour.

"Oh, then, I'll walk," he said, drawing back.

"And I think I shall, too, if you don't mind helping me out, Mr. Armstrong. I am squeezed half to death here."

Miss Laura managed to wriggle, not ungracefully, off the back of the cart, and tramped briskly down the dusty road with her companion, not quickly enough, however, to escape hearing the beginning of a remark behind:

"Well, if that isn't the most barefaced——"

"How far is it?" she asked him when they slackened their pace at the first hill.

"Three miles."

"Is that all? I can do that distance without any trouble. I was afraid it was further."

"We can make it shorter still going by the beach."

"Let us, then. Anyway, we'll not arrive till they've got all the wood and water they need. They'll not have the chance to make you a man of all work as usual."

"No one can complain of my having made myself too generally useful this last week or two."

"You've been specially useful, which is much more to the purpose," said Laura, beaming upon him so cheerfully that his naturally good spirits began to rise again.

"Perhaps you think you can see the north shore of the river to-day," he said as they reached the sands.

"Why, so I do! I was always sure it must be visible from this side, but you told me it wasn't. What funny gaps there are between the mountains, though, just as if bits of them had been rubbed out here and there."

"Look again after we get on a bit farther."

He called her attention to some curious bits of seaweed, or oddly-shaped shells, for the tide was far out, and they walked on the strips of sand and rocks it had left bare, springing sometimes from one flat stone to another to avoid a pool, or stepping carefully through a shallow freshwater stream from the land.

They made digressions, too, up to the bushy bank for the scarlet pigeon berries, that with their triplets of glossy leaves added an artistic finish to Laura's broad sun-hat. She trimmed Mr. Armstrong's, too, and when she returned it to him he said:

"See your mountains now, Miss Somerville!"

"Dear me! The blank spots don't seem to be in the same places. I suppose that is because we've been moving on."

"Not a bit of it! Next time you look you won't see anything at all maybe. The whole thing's a mirage. It reminds me of woman's friendship."

"But there must be a solid foundation of mountains over there somewhere, or we wouldn't see their reflection. Don't look so tragic, please. It is quite out of place in 'the young man called John.'"

Laura's laugh was as rare as it was delightful, and no one within reach of the sound of it could mope for long.

By the time they reached Mount Misery the tablecloth was laid on the grass and the company assembled.

"Laura, come here," said Mrs. Sheyn sternly, and with some uneasiness her sister took her place beside her. It seemed that there always had to be a reaction after a particularly good time.

"Understand, you are to drive home in one of the carriages with me," was her sister's fiat, delivered in an impressive undertone.

Around the spread there were some of the new arrivals at the hotel—Montreal people—and that was perhaps the reason the young ladies did not so speedily as usual make room for Mr. Armstrong.

"Come over here beside me, John," said Mr. Hatch cordially; but the young fellow felt himself out in the cold, from what cause he could not divine. He watched his chance, and contrived to get Laura off for a scramble up the steep, rocky path to view the sunset from the top of the Mount. She had never refused to go anywhere with him, because she had found, as girls speedily do, that he was not one of those young men who persist in helping a lady too much. Where it was necessary, he gave his assistance without making any fuss about it; and where it was not he proceeded on that good comrade principle so thoroughly approved of by every girl of independent spirit—and Canada is full of them.

Mount Misery was made for lovers. There were plenty of cosy corners with rocks for the back, rocks to sit upon, rocks for footstools, and bushes enough to serve as screens without obstructing the prospect. Jack and Laura sat still awhile, watching the last of the sunlight upon the sail of a solitary fishing-boat. A heron flew past, going home, and the advancing tide held a whispered conversation with the rocks far below. Suddenly louder voices broke upon

the quietness, one of them with that ultra English accent which betrays the Quebecker. Two ladies, who had evidently climbed up by another path, paused for a minute or two, out of sight, but within hearing.

"My dear, I assure you it's quite true. I've seen him often behind the counter, and I've had dealings with his mother, who is the head milliner."

"How perfectly dreadful!"

"Yes, that's the worst of these sea-side places. You never know what sort of people you're going to be thrown with."

"And he seems such a gentleman, too, though I must say I always thought him a little officious; something shoppy about his manner."

"Oh, yes, one can generally tell. That is why I was so surprised to find him quite in your set when I arrived yesterday. Quebec people get the name of being very particular about that sort of thing. I thought at first it must be some other Armstrong, but I knew him the minute I saw him, though, of course, the flannel suit is a great improvement."

"Mrs. Sheyn will be furious when she thinks of the way she has allowed that young sister of hers to go about with him. She is very well connected, I believe."

"Oh, yes — Civil Service — husband a broker. She will pass muster anywhere in Canada; but really we have to draw the line somewhere." And so the voices moved on out of hearing.

The pair left behind sat silently for a moment, and then Jack rose. There was an unusual sneer upon his lip, and a touch of cynicism in his tone as he said, gazing out over the river:

"Perhaps we had better go now, Miss Somerville. Listeners never hear any good of themselves. One would think I was a defaulting cashier, or something of that sort."

Laura did not move. Her dark face was glowing, and her eyes full of tears.

"Your sister will wonder where you are," he said, still looking away from her.

"Jack!" she cried, and then he turned and sat down at her feet while she put her two hands on his shoulders, as if to shield him from all the world.

"I am sorry that your feelings have been hurt by this news about me," he said, stirring uneasily beneath her hold. "I should have told you myself, only I never thought of it. When I am off on a holiday I don't think of business."

"It was no news to me. Miss Wardlaw told me last winter that you were a clerk in a retail store. What hurts me is the idea that you should care what such people say."

Then he fidgeted no more but rested his head against her, and taking her hands into his:

"I care for nothing in the world, Laura, except for you."

A bright moonlight evening down on the beach, with the tide almost full, and coming in so quietly that it scarcely broke upon the sands. A number of ladies from the hotel sat perched tier above tier upon the flat-topped rocks, their faces lit up by the blaze of a huge bonfire which light-stepping young men in picturesque summer garb kept a-roaring. Mrs. Sheyn, enthroned aloft, looked majestic, but seemed to share in the proverbial uneasiness of crowned heads, for she peered anxiously into the outskirts of the party.

"Have you seen Laura anywhere lately?" she asked her nearest neighbour.

"Why, there she is!" was the reply, as a canoe crossed the glassy track of the moon on the water. Some one in a scarlet shawl was snugly seated in the bow, while kneeling, facing her, was a figure in white, handling the paddle with a grace peculiar to one young man. The darkness from under the trees gathered on Mrs. Sheyn's brows as the two landed a little way along the shore and came up to the edge of the hotel group. Jack was not as heretofore asked to lead off in the choruses, it having been recently discovered that he sang shockingly out of tune, but he seemed content to stretch himself out on the sand beside Laura, who sat somewhat apart from the brightest glare with tiny bonfires in her eyes. He spoke to her in a low voice.

"Do you see Mr. Hatch sitting beside your sister now?"

"Yes. She seems in a better humour now than she was a few minutes ago."

"I can wager I know the cause of the change."

"Do tell me then."

"He is informing her that he has offered a good position in his bank to the obnoxious counter-jumper in whom her sister has the bad taste to be interested."

"Jack! You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do. I did not intend to say anything about it to you to-night, but now Mrs. Sheyn will surely tell you."

"What answer did you give?" said the young girl, her eyes leaving the fire and turning to his.

"None, as yet. What I say depends on what you say."

She said nothing.

"It seems he has noticed that I have been rather sent to Coventry this last week, and guessed the reason. He's an Englishman, you know, and is rather amused at our colonial distinctions between banks and shops; but he says I'll have to change my calling if I want to hold my own with my aristocratic sister-in-law."

Laura smiled a little, but still held her peace.

"I told him I wanted to get married right away, and could afford to do it if I stayed where I was."

The girl's cheeks flamed, but she spoke not.

"It is a good post he has offered me, over the heads of lots of fellows who have taken years to work up to where they are."

Still Miss Somerville made no remark, and he went on.

"If I were a bank clerk, however poor, I could hold my head as high as that ninny of a Willoughby, and your sister would quite approve of me."

"But I should not!" exclaimed Laura. "I'd despise you if you took a place you had not earned. You've told me how proud you are of having risen to be head of your department. You will surely not throw away the work of all these years, and strike out in a new line at twenty-five? What would your mother say if you turned into a dude, were tempted to live beyond your salary, and got to be ashamed of her?"

"Faith, and I'd have to live on her!" laughed young Armstrong. "I knew you would look at it just as I do, Laura, at least I hoped you would, for I'd have given in if you really preferred to be the wife of a bank clerk; but giving in to Mrs. Sheyn is quite another matter."

The brightness died out of the girl's face, and she shivered slightly.

"You're afraid of her, I really believe!" Miss Somerville's smile was weak and wan, very unlike the whole-hearted beam of a minute ago.

"I know I ought not to be, but I've been browbeaten by her ever since I was a bit of a girl, and old habits are hard to break."

"Well, I'll break this one, or it shall break me," said young Armstrong. "Don't discuss the subject with her at all to-night, and we'll talk it over again when we have our final paddle before breakfast to-morrow. Ah me! To think that we have only one more day."

Slowly the fire died down, and by twos and threes the people betook themselves up to the hotel. Jack was privileged to escort Mrs. Sheyn, while Mr. Hatch followed with Laura.

The summer hotels on the Lower St. Lawrence are but wooden shells, guiltless of lath or plaster, and every sound is heard from one room to another. Young Armstrong did not sleep well that night, and before daybreak he was startled at hearing stealthy footsteps in the passage.

"Too early for any of the servants to be up," he thought, and thereupon rising he looked cautiously out of his door. By the last of the moonlight he saw a man trying the door-handle of the room which Laura shared with her sister. Quick as a flash the young fellow flew down the corridor, dragged the intruder into his own room and shut the door.

"Now! Perhaps you'll tell me what you're after," he said, keeping tight hold of his collar, "and don't talk out so as to alarm the whole house."

He was a small, seedy-looking individual, and he fairly shook in the grasp of the athletic Montrealer.

"If you plaze, sor, I was lookin' for me woife's room. They tould me down the shtair it was number seventy-foive."

"And who is your wife, pray?"

"Mrs. Sheehan, Mrs. Patrick Sheehan, yer honour. Ough! Let me go!"

"There's no such person staying at this hotel," said Jack, and he shook the small man to elicit further information, which was not long in coming.

"She was here the other day, thin, and she tould me to wait for her in Montreal, but I thought I'd jest come on. The thrain was late, and niver a bit of a Canude could I get to dhrive me from the depôt, so I had to walk, an' I losht me way, and it's only now I'm here. An' if ye'll jest tell me woife or her sister Larra Somerville——"

"What?"

"Shure, it's the thruth I'm tellin' ye, an' ye naden't look so fierce. I'm an honest man in the pawnbrokin' business in Ottawa, an' me woife's father iverybody knew. He used to be missinger in wan o' the departments."

Here the captor broke into a reassuring laugh.

"Civil Service, sure enough! Excuse me, Mr. Sheehan," he said. "But your wife's name has not been spelt nor pronounced exactly like yours down here, and

that's how I didn't recognise it at once. You're welcome to sleep on my sofa the rest of the night."

"The young man called John" saw no reason why the arrival of this unexpected visitor should prevent the morning paddle with Laura. Rising early and leaving him still asleep, he ran down the steep rocky path to the beach to get the canoe ready for his ladylove. By the time it was afloat Laura hurried down in her white dress, but ere she had embarked who should arrive upon the scene but Mrs. Sheyn, all smiles.

"I've so often wanted to explore Bull Rock, Mr. Armstrong," she said, with a stately wave of her hand towards the high, bare island less than a mile from the shore; "and this is the very last chance I shall have to see it. Would you greatly object to taking me there?"

"Wants to ask my intentions," thought Jack, "before she lets Laura go any further. Well, she cannot make too much of a row in a canoe!"

Before Laura fully grasped the situation, her sister, instead of herself, was seated in the boat, and Jack, with a regretful smile to the girl he left behind him, had turned the canoe with a couple of swift strokes, and now it was gliding through the glistening water towards Bull Rock. The morning air did not seem quite so delicious as usual to the girl as she retraced her steps. A solitary figure on the back gallery arrested her attention.

"Why, Pat!" she cried cheerfully, "who'd have dreamed of seeing you here!" and she shook hands heartily with her brother-in-law, who, dressed in his best, presented a better appearance than he had done the night before, but he was still utterly unlike the ordinary summer hotel lounger.

"Ssh! Where is she?" said the small man.

"Gone for a paddle with Mr. Armstrong. Time you were looking her up," and Laura smiled again. "She'll be very angry at you, though, for coming here, I'm afraid."

"Me, too!" was the doleful reply. "An' wasn't I nearly took up for a burglar last night. Ye see, she tould me she was goin' to hurry you off somewhere's else on account of some young man ye'd taken up wid, an' I thought if I didn't come right on I wouldn't mabbe see you at all, at all."

"I'm afraid she's got us both under her thumb," sighed Laura. "But if I were you, I'd keep out of her way till we're at the station. We go to-day by the afternoon train. Now come to breakfast, and you shall sit in her seat!"

With all the dignity of her sister did she introduce the common-looking little man to her neighbours at table as her brother-in-law, and she loyally did her best to cover up his deficiencies in manners and conversation.

Besides Mrs. Sheyn and her sister, a number of visitors were leaving the hotel that day. Seats had been reserved in one of the vehicles for the two Ottawa ladies, but when it was time to start on the six-mile drive to the station, only Miss Somerville turned up, breathless and rather anxious-looking, while Jack Armstrong took the vacant place beside her on the back board.

For a wonder, the up-train was punctual, and at the station every one was too busy looking after baggage to make special enquiries for Mrs. Sheyn. At the last moment, however, a very hot, very shabby little man rushed up and seized young Armstrong, just as he was boarding the car in which he had already seated Miss Somerville.

"What have you done wid me woife?"

"Didn't you get the note I left for you?"

"What's the good o' that whin I can't rade?" Mr. Armstrong tried to free himself from the irate Irishman, but he clung to him tightly, and the noisy train was already in motion when Jack roared into his ear:

"I took her out to Bull Rock in the canoe, and she wouldn't come back in it with me. I said I'd send you to fetch her. She'll be glad to see you by this time. Tell her that Laura and I are to be married at Rivière du Loup!"

With an agile movement the youth freed himself and swung up on the last platform of the train, leaving Mr. Sheehan speechless, with his mouth open!

AN ARCTIC MAY-DAY.

It is England's merry month; the month of May—but out here, with a boundless ice-line, a rough Boreas tugging at our beards, and a white drift driving on board, how little is there to remind us of the first of May, the Maypole, and the merry gatherers!

The outlook is cold and cheerless. My goatskin cap is well over my ears, and I

have not appeared without my mittens. I step up and down the poop several times clapping my hands.

The fact is, we are fast to a giant floe. If you step forward you will see the wire cables passing from the ship, and the ice-anchors fixed in the floe. The captain is below reading "Temple Bar." The second is down in the hold weighing out provisions with the steward; and only three men of the watch are at the peak, the rest enjoying the comfort of a pipe before the galley fire.

The shutter of the engine-room is closed, but, pushing back the top, I see that the engineer is below, and descend. The chief and fireman are having a clean-up, so I content myself for a time with watching them; but this grows stale after a time, and I am soon on my way forward to the half-deck for a variety.

Just below the main-hatch the sail-maker is busily engaged weaving a hemp mat for the captain. He is making it from untwined whale-line. The operation is interesting, but I cannot describe it.

He grumbles somewhat over the business, and this sets me in a good humour, inasmuch as I feel that I ought to be so much the happier of the two in having nothing to do.

I pass on, and at the forepart of the half-deck I find the carpenter very busy indeed, swearing and grumbling in a dull monotone while piecing together the component parts of a child's wheelbarrow, also for the captain.

He is a sour, unwholesome-looking man, with a face like a dried pear. Having a grudge against him, for accusing me of spoiling a saw of his in severing a bear's jaw, I take a malicious delight in pressing home the infra-digness of a ship's carpenter being set to make baby's wheelbarrows. This is quite his opinion, and, besides, the very knowledge that the captain is making use of him at all is enough to enrage the best sailor in existence.

This is, of course, exactly what the captain is doing; and when he tells me there are two more barrows in request, I sit down on the bench and condole with him at length, to my own satisfaction, if not to his. I go so far as to even advocate a dose of salts before he starts the second, by way of keeping him up to the mark.

The galley is full of men. And just by the forehatch some members of the watch on deck are playing dominoes. They ask me to join them, and—why, surely, I have no objection, and am soon busy with the chalk summing up on the lid of a sea-chest.

From this they wish to proceed to catch-the-ten; but, even if I did not object to gambling on principle, nothing would tempt me to play with the filthy objects presented to the company by Elrick under the name of cards. No! nothing would tempt me. And so, with a passing peep in at the cook and his confrères, who greet me noisily, and another into the "house," inhabited by the spectioneer, harpooners, sailmaker, and carpenter, I return once more to the embrace of the north wind and the snow.

But I am wrong; there is no snow. The atmosphere has quite changed. The burly breeze has sunk into a fine air; and—glory! is not that the sun pushing through over the mizen-top?

Assuredly it is. And in ten minutes we are revelling in a burst of sunshine.

I think this a good opportunity to take a walk on dry land—if I may apply this term to an ice-floe—so I step along the port chains, seize the bow ladder hanging from the sprit, and so on to the snow.

There is no Act of Parliament preventing you from going where you like; but there are also no warning finger-posts, and you may step into a drift or ice-crack, or slip into a fresh-water hole—an unpleasant and by no means uncommon accompaniment of constitutionals.

I take mine, however, and manage to avoid these dangers. I see, also, the track of a bear, or "The Laird," as the sailors call it, and communicate this fact to the crew on my return. The discovery in itself is not an important one, as the prints are not fresh; but, nevertheless, I enlarge upon it.

The water we are in, from its colour, shows the possible presence of a food-bank, and therefore a most likely spot for the whales we are in search of. The weather having cleared, a sharp look-out is kept by the watch at the forepeak, and the second is in the crow's-nest searching the numerous bights between adjacent scances with the long glass.

I walk the poop, enjoying the May sunshine that now pours from a blue, cloudless dome. Glancing carelessly through the cabin-top, I see that the captain has renounced "Temple Bar" for "Blackwood." I comment inwardly on the fact. Whatever the cravings for culture, he does not show much in himself, either externally or

internally, to a companion. His association with this literature does not increase my appreciation of the same, which, of course, is a most unfair way of judging things. And I admit it.

The engineer has come up from below and is hanging out of the engine-room window. I sit down beside him, and we discuss ship's gossip. We have not conversed long, however, when the second descends the main ratlines behind us, and pops down the companion hastily.

"Well," says Mr. Brown, "what's up now? Brucie's got a big speed on!"

"Blest if I know!" say I; "but it strikes me he's seen something."

"Ten to one it's a bear, then," replies the chief.

Our curiosity and anxiety are not of long duration. The captain comes up the stairs hoching loudly, and the second follows. We hear mention of "unicorns" (narwhals), and Bruce points away over the starboard quarter. Then the captain mounts to the crow, and the second seats himself beside us; whereupon we gain the full truth.

Soon the order comes to lower away for unicorns on the starboard quarter. The watch is summoned on deck; the men are as eager as schoolboys; down drops the boat from the davits; the crew crowd over the side, I with them. Splash! A fellow has missed his grip and fallen in.

We laugh heartily as he is dragged into the boat like a young bear, and bundled on deck again. The more so, as he seems so sorry for himself, and vows vengeance in strictly nautical language on the man who trod on his fingers, and caused him to quit the rung of the ladder.

This does not delay us long. And we are now making good progress with the paddles, which in narwhal fishing take the place of oars. Speed is not called for, as in whaling, and they have a much less alarming effect.

We pass round a corner of ice and enter a smaller bay. Bruce points out the spot where the fish were seen, so we lie by at the edge of the floe in readiness for their appearance.

The floe here towers up into an irregular chain of hills. The average is about twenty feet, but goes up to fifty. It makes a very pretty bight, and I quite like the appearance of my first unicorn hunt.

For the past few days I have noticed a strange absence of bird life. I put it down that we are too far into the field. There is an occasional boatswain bird, a kittiwake, and an ivory gull or two. Sometimes a sea-swallow passes overhead. But not a single mollie, or burgie, or loom, or rochie, or dovekie. I like my bird friends, and regret their absence.

We have been lying by for ten minutes on the tip-toe of excitement, and the first thing that appears to us is an impertinent floe-rat. It receives a curse from the crew, and disappears with immodest haste.

These floe-rats seem to be wherever you go. They torment you much as the cheeky redbreast does, when you are stationed in a wood with every nerve on the alert for a sound or shadow.

Suddenly we hear a soft, soughing sound like the slow expiration of a deep breath. It is a unicorn risen from beneath the floe astern of us. Turning, we see the dark margin of its body lined above the surface some forty yards off.

The steersman sweeps the boat round gently by means of his long oar. Then the paddles dip softly in the water—care being taken to not break the surface—and the boat begins to glide forward without a ripple.

The fish seems unconscious of our approach, and continues to blow quietly.

I say blow, but strictly speaking a narwhal cannot be said to do so, as no jet of water accompanies the breath.

Nearer and nearer we approach. The second is standing at the bow with the handle of the gun grasped in his hand. We cease paddling at the spreading of his palm. He glances along the barrel. Bang! The unicorn is struck, and a spout of mingled blood and water rises into the air.

"Hurrah!" we shout. There is an answering echo from the ship. And now the line begins to rush over the bow.

But it is a short affair with a narwhal on a whale-line, and in five minutes it is floating lifeless on the surface.

It is not a great success we have achieved. But it is a unicorn, which is always something towards the filling up; and we paddle towards the ship in great good-humour, towing our prize.

Those on deck set up a tackle and haul it on board. And then, having recoiled our line, we start out afresh.

It is evidently a good bank we are over. Narwhals are quite numerous, and we have no difficulty in obtaining another, with a horn this time that alone was really worth getting.

I speak of horn, as it is commonly spoken

of thus; few people knowing—and certainly not these sailors—that it has nothing of the nature of a horn in it, but is really an extraordinary developement of one of the upper canine teeth.

Another watch now mans the boat, and, as I keep my position against all comers, I have the pleasure of seeing Davidson the spectioneer in command.

There is a warm softness in the sun's rays, and the sport is such that the laziest man in existence would be charmed with it. And I do not mean to imply that it is any the less keenly exciting on account of the inconveniences surrounding so many other sports being absent here. On the contrary, it has a charm of its own, and comparisons are odious.

Let us look around us. The sea is green, with a tint of brown and yellow in it showing the presence of innumerable animalcula. The sky is blue, like the upturned petal of a cornflower; and the floe and the scances white and reflective as the top of my own Lochnagar in the clear frost and sunshine of a winter's day.

This is not a varied colouring for a scene; still, it too has a charm of its own that must be seen to be appreciated, and will not admit of justice being done to it by my humble pen, however willing I am to do my best for the country that has left its imprint on me for ever.

As we progress, dipping our paddles deep, we cross the "water" of several fish, but nothing rises before us. We lie by, and for so long that we begin to think the unicorns have shifted, and we are to be singularly unsuccessful.

"Some one's shouting from the ship," says one of the men to the spectioneer.

"Yes," says another, "I heard him." And on turning round, we see the captain in the nest directing us, as it seems, into a bight beyond, whither we proceed in keen hopefulness.

No sooner have we rounded a long, semicircular point than the soft soughing again catches our ears. We do not see them at once, but shortly count ten, lying within the slight shadow of the floe-edge.

Here is a stroke! There is no doubt of being right this time. And we are all alive at the thought of good sport.

As we near the first one, unexpected misfortune besets us. The man next the stroke is overcome by a sneeze; and whether this is the cause or not, I can't tell, but the nearest two just raise their eyes above the surface for a moment, and disappear with the slow, soft motion of a feather falling through the air.

The man, a Shetlander, is oppressed with shame; but his comrades, with no sympathy, are fiercely outspoken in their indignation. I feel for the poor fellow, for have I not felt the same remorseless sneeze in boyhood, upon occasions of great gravity?

Alas! luck seems quite against us. For no conceivable reason another unicorn sinks, with the same stately indolence, as we approach.

But, now, ahead of us are three—one young thing, and two old ones—to all appearances a family party.

"Could ye manage to string them, Jake, think ye?" says Smith, the boat-steerer, to Davidson.

"Think we'll have a good try, lad, anyway. Bring her round a bit, and get them two old uns in a bee's-line. Steady! There, as ye are. And now, boys, keep yer paddles deep, and no sneeching, mind."

We obey orders, and the boat glides on, swiftly but silently.

With narwhals "stringing" is a most favourite trick, and tried by the harpooners when at all possible. It is intended that the harpoon should pass clean through the first, skip over the surface of the water, and so into the second. It is necessary that the boat should be much nearer than in the case of harpooning one, and a considerable distance between the animals may be allowed, provided always that the line is a direct one.

This, then, is what we are about to attempt.

We have been paddling with breathless care, and scarce twenty yards now separates us. Davidson sights steadily, and suddenly there is a loud report, causing a piece of loose snow to break off from the floe and tumble into the sea. At the same moment two unicorns spring into the air, and fall back with a single splash.

The stringing is a success. Up goes a ringing cheer that skips over the sea, and flings itself from point to point of the ice-floe in waves of sound. Away flies the line over the bow; but next minute the strain ceases, and they come to the surface dead.

I am a little disappointed at the quick termination. But, no matter, we have something to take to the ship, and the mercenary spirit rises up to comfort the sporting.

When I am once more on deck, I find

that a fellow has cut his finger with a flinching knife. I apply to the medicine chest for remedies, and, by the time it is dressed, the steward announces tea.

It is a welcome announcement, I assure you, so I step down at once.

I see that May-Day has not made any change in our fare. I did not really expect that it would, but had a slight hope, nevertheless, that the steward might have been trying his hand at a few jam-tarts again. However, as he has not, I must needs satisfy myself with hard tack and butter. No, nonsense! Here comes the steward with a dish of Finnan haddocks, and a new atmosphere surrounds the table.

As we rise, the captain addresses the engineer:

"Get up steam, Mr. Brown; we're going to run on a bit to the westward." And then to the first mate: "Have the boat hauled up, Duncan. And keep the watch ready to take in the anchors."

"Yes, sir," says Duncan below me, and I hear his footsteps coming up the stairs.

"Forward, here," cries he to the watch, "and haul up this boat!"

There is a clatter of sea-boots on the deck.

"Lend a hand, will you, doctor?"

"All right," say I; and we are soon lying on the rope to a "ho-hoy-e-oy-e!" from the first, which is quite his patent chorus.

The boat is up, and the captain on the bridge.

"Overboard, there, and haul in those ice-anchors!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" and two men scramble along the chains and drop on to the floe. They unhook the anchors, which are then hauled aboard.

In a few minutes the captain calls down to the engineer: "Half-speed astern when you're ready." And almost at once, with a slow, pausing motion the screw begins to turn, and the ship glides softly back from the great floe.

And now the engines are half-speed ahead. The sprit is westward, and once more we are threading through the mazy field of ice in quest of the mighty leviathan whose home is the snow-clad deep. And, though many of you, perhaps, have joined hands around the maypole this day in merry England, yet I do not envy you, for I carry with me, as we westward ho! many pleasant pictures of an Arctic May-Day at the floe-edge.

ON SOME ADVANTAGES OF STANDING ARMIES.

A GREAT stir is being made about the, apparently, continually increasing armaments of the Continental Powers. The world is being told that this persistent aggrandisement of the "big battalions" is a source of danger rather to the members of their own households, than to the possible foes across the border. Wise men have arisen who are pointing out to us that the German army bids fair to work more mischief to Germany than to France; that the French army promises to produce Gallic demoralisation; while there is every prospect that the Italian army will land its own country in the quagmires of national bankruptcy. That there is a great deal to be said against any and every standing army, it does not need a sage to tell us. We in England have been familiar with the "evils of war" from our youth upwards. We have some of us only too much reason to be aware that to a large number of well-meaning Englishmen any allusion to war, even to war in self-defence, is like a red rag to a bull. It is, perhaps, because we are thus intimately acquainted with the arguments which may be urged upon the one side that we are apt at times to forget that this question, like all other questions, has two sides, that there is something to be said even for those modern monsters, standing armies.

There is, for instance, something surely to be said from the Socialistic point of view. If one understands the teachings of a certain school of Socialists, they would seem to assert that it is the duty of a State to support its citizens. Well, in France, and Germany, and Russia, at some period of their lives, all the male citizens are supported by the State. More than ten per cent. of the entire population of France is being wholly or partly supported by drafts on national resources—though the individuals change, the percentage continually remains. Something like eight per cent. of the population of Germany is in the same position. On what ground can a Socialist, who carries his gospel to its logical extremity, object to such a state of things as this? These men do work for the State, for which they are paid by the State, their fellow-citizens of course being taxed for their support. In the ideal State of the Socialist, the common earnings will go into a common fund in order that all men shall

be fed, and clothed, and kept alive. It is true that in France and in Germany only a share of the common earnings goes into a common fund, and that, therefore, by means of the common fund only a large number of men, and not the entire population, can be fed, and clothed, and kept alive. But since a step forward is a step gained, surely the Socialists cannot complain of this. France and Germany are progressing. Indeed, they are progressing as fast as they really can. If they continue to advance in the same ratio, it is not impossible that the Socialist's dream will still in some sort be realised, and that the entire population will be supported by the State.

But, say the Socialists, and with them a great many other people too, these men are not being supported by the State in a proper manner. First of all, their service, such as it is, is not voluntary, it is involuntary; and secondly, while drawing everything from the common fund, they contribute nothing to it. In this secondly we have touched upon the never-failing stock argument which is being urged against the huge armaments of to-day. All sorts and conditions of people are assuring us that soldiers are not producers; that, so far from being legitimate wage-earners, and therefore deserving of being kept alive, they are mere parasites upon the body politic, and are sucking it dry. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that in this time of theoretically perfect peace, four hundred thousand men are in Germany being completely supported by the State—in other words, are being manufactured into soldiers.

When confronted by such a statement, surely one reflection occurs to us at once. Competition in Germany is peculiarly keen; in no country in the world is it keener. The struggle for existence is getting harder and harder. Men work, and are glad to work, for wages which in England we should scorn. In industrial matters, Germany is, beyond all others, the land of the sweater. The standard of living is lower than it is with us. But low though it is, men find it hard to reach it. The demand, even for starvation wages, is far greater than the supply. Hence the stream of emigration which is continually flowing from German ports to all the countries of the world. Suppose the four hundred thousand men who, at an unduly low estimate, may be considered to form the permanent peace footing of the German army, were to be added to the already over-large number of the wage-earning class, would the result, either in the present or the future, be certain to tend towards an improvement in the position of that class? That the answer is obviously an affirmative one, one fails to see.

In Great Britain we have always with us something like a million paupers—that is, a million persons who are being supported by the State. In little England alone we can lay claim to seven hundred and thirty-four thousand odd. It costs us as much, if it does not cost us more, to keep body and soul together in a pauper as it costs the Germans to keep body and soul together in a soldier. And it must be remembered that while the paupers do practically nothing at all for their native land, the soldiers do a great deal for theirs, and that quite apart from all questions of fighting. For one thing, they are responsible for the condition of the public roads. In France, especially, the national highways, for which the military authorities are entirely responsible, and on which all work is done gratuitously, are as near perfection as they very well could be. Compared to them, our high-roads are a scandal and a shame. It would be almost worth our while to increase the size of our standing army if only for the sake of having our roads kept in proper order.

Suppose those four hundred thousand German soldiers were at once disbanded, considering the already congested state of the country, is it not possible, to say the least of it, that a considerable proportion of them would drift into pauperism? Or, what is as bad, that the increased pressure of competition would drive a number of struggling folk, who are already on the verge of pauperism, clean over the edge? Is a pauper better than a soldier? One may be one of a long line of peace-at-any-price civilians, and yet may be justified in doubting it. A soldier is at least a man; nothing could be much less like a man than the average so-called "able-bodied" pauper.

It is by no means certain that a great deal of nonsense is not talked about the injury which is done to a nation by compelling "the bone and sinew" of a country to serve in the ranks. One sometimes sees it stated that there is no worse school of training for a man than the army. A statement of this kind can only be characterised as a lie unvarnished. It is not true of the English army, which is not exactly a model of its class; it is the reverse of true of some of the Continental armies. I make bold to say that there could be no finer training school than

the German army. It would not be to everybody's taste; for instance, it would very probably not be to the taste of some of our keepers of what is coming to be called the "nonconformist conscience." It is much too hard a school, and the training is much too genuine. But, beyond doubt, the average man who goes through the various courses required from him by the German military authorities, and issues from them with credit, is a better man at the end than he was at the beginning. A better man, both physically and morally. He has learnt how to obey and how to command; how to control himself and others. He is able to appreciate the part which a good citizen should play in the commonweal. That this is so, few who have any intimate acquaintance with Germany and the Germans will deny. "The Fatherland" is a land of soldiers, its sons are making great forward strides in the world; and, whether we like it or not, the fact is indubitable that this is, to some extent, owing to the system of militarism which prevails.

I have seen it stated, on what ought to have been good authority, that compulsory military service incapacitates a man for civilian life. Although the authority ought to have been good, actually it could not have been worse—the thing is a patent absurdity. In Germany every man is a soldier; he is not wholly quit of military service till he is forty-two. Are there better citizens than the Germans? better husbands and fathers? better men of business? of letters? of affairs? If, taking them as a whole, other nations do excel them in these respects, one would like to know which those nations are. We in England have had it dinned into our ears so persistently that under all possible circumstances a great standing army is an accursed thing, that, in spite of the most obvious facts to the contrary, we have, some of us, come to believe that in favour of such an institution there is nothing to be said, but that it is a sort of Upas tree, which inevitably and invariably desolates the country in which it is found. The truth is that nowadays politics in England are parochial politics. We are in the hands of the faddists. With us public opinion is apt to be voiced by vestrymen rather than by statesmen.

The greatest of the charges which is wont to be hurled against a standing army is its cost. We are told, for instance—to take a glaring example—that the cost of her armaments is hurrying Italy into national bankruptcy. It only needs a cursory knowledge of modern Italy, and of modern methods of Italian finance, to cause one to seriously doubt if, in this case, at any rate, the charge can be substantiated. Italy to-day is a monumental example of national mismanagement — nay, more, of national dishonesty. She has been, and she still is, outrunning the constable in every direction. The extravagance of her armaments is but one extravagance out of many. Out of every pound which is set down as being the cost of those armaments, it is not impossible that fifteen shillings is stolen on the way. In the hands of her present breed of politicians, Italy would, sooner or later, be in dire straits, though she had not a single ship nor a single soldier.

It is certain that France, Germany, and Russia have not been ruined by their armaments; while Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and Greece, which to all intents and purposes are soldierless and sailorless, have been brought as near to ruin as they conveniently could be. France has kept her army on a nominal war footing of something like four million men for over twenty years; has spent colossal sums upon her navy; has paid the largest sum, by way of war indemnity, which the world has heard of; and yet to-day she is richer than she ever was. What evidence is there to show that, if she had not had to bear the expense of her armaments, her financial position would have been better than it is? The war of '70 placed France in a peculiar position. The obloquy of her situation braced the nation's nerves. She rose to the occasion; her efforts were equal to her necessities; the compulsion which was put upon her to use a giant's strength has enabled her to discover for herself, and to prove to the world, that her strength is indeed gigantic. It is at least within the range of possibility that some day France's necessity may be our own; that dire disaster will compel us, as a nation, to awake from slumber. On that day, without doubt, we also shall prove that a giant's strength is ours; and we in our turn shall give to the world an object lesson in the truth that great armaments do not necessarily mean anything approaching to financial ruin.

It should always be remembered—some of us seem apt to forget it—that the money spent on armies and navies goes into somebody's pocket. In no sense can it be said to be wasted. If armies and navies were to vanish off the face of the earth to-morrow

every industry would suffer. Many of them would be utterly destroyed. The destruction of any one branch of industry means, to begin with, that a certain number of persons are rendered insolvent, and that then, to save themselves from starvation, they are forced to turn to some other branch which already, in all probability, is overcrowded. If, as some of the wise would have it, the nations, with one common consent, were to agree to disarm, how many millions of men and women would be thrown out of employment? The imagination shudders at the horrors such a prospect would suggest. In particular, vast hosts of the artisan class all the world over would be driven to despair. For them, practically, nothing would be left but death.

Probably the most advanced teetotal fanatic would hesitate to give practical effect to his doctrines if he were confronted by the necessity of giving lucrative occupation to the myriads whom the world-wide adoption of the principles of total abstinence from alcoholic liquors would leave with nothing to do, and with nothing to live on. If the teetotalers had their way, and all the breweries, and distilleries, and wine-presses were to cease to exist, think of the dimensions which the question of the unemployed would assume! If what, with all its innumerable ramifications, is infinitely the greatest industry in the world, were to be utterly destroyed root and branch, as the teetotalers would have it, there would not be merely national, there would be universal bankruptcy. In every village and in every town from pole to pole there would be ruin and despair.

Fortunately, teetotalers never will have their own way. When it comes to practice, as apart from theory, sanity is still likely to continue predominant in the councils of the world. Equally fortunately, the peace-at-any-price fraternity are as little likely to have theirs. If they did, they would work even more mischief, were it possible, than their abstaining friends. Universal disarmament, that is, disarmament in all the countries of the globe—as the peace-at-any-price folk would have it—instead of destroying one great industry, would destroy numbers. In other words, peace, as peace, would work more havoc than war! Where war had slain its tens, peace would slay its thousands. A short period of peace of that sort would inevitably result in something approaching to universal war—a general conflict.

Nothing in this world has one aspect only. Nothing is an unmixed evil, nothing is an unmixed blessing. Strange though it may seem, it is just as well that it is so. Our blessings would be little esteemed if they were not liberally diluted with the other kind of thing. "Toujours perdrix" is good neither for common men nor cardinals. Nor are general principles necessarily applicable to particular cases. You cannot fit copybook headings to all the situations which occur in actual life. Huge armaments are not unmitigated blessings, there cannot be a doubt of it. Nor are spendthrifts always persons to be commended. But as things are, one cannot see how the world would get on without either. If we had been without them from the beginning, it would be different; but we have not. We have come to look upon them as fulfilling certain functions, and as those are functions which must be fulfilled, if they cease to fulfil them, it is difficult to perceive where we should be able to find at a moment's notice—because at a moment's notice they would have to be found—efficient substitutes.

If one looks closely into the matter, one perceives that, from the point of view of a particular kind of abstract morality, few sources of expenditure can be called legitimate. If we are to accept as gospel the teachings of the doctrinaires who assert that "a penny saved is always a penny gained," and that to spend money on aught but necessaries, on what some folks call "wanton luxury," is necessarily waste, then the whole machine of existing civilisation will have to stop. It is only extravagance, in that sense, which keeps it going. If every one, nations as well as individuals, were to look at every penny before spending it, the world would be a good deal poorer than it is. Profuse expenditure in some direction there must be; the particular direction which should be chosen is, possibly, a matter of taste. One would venture to suggest that it is, at most, a question of opinion whether the money which is spent on a great system of national defence is more wasted than that which is lavished on the visionary projects which, in England, are so popular—such, say, as the conversion of the Jews or of the inhabitants of the Chinese Empire.

Might one venture, without offence, to say one thing further with reference to the fuss which certain enthusiasts are making about Continental armaments, and to put that thing in the form of an enquiry? How is it that so many of us English find

it hard to keep our fingers out of other people's pies? There lies before me, in a well-known periodical, a sensational article, under a sensational title, in which the writer calls upon the Continental Powers to what he calls "Halt!" There is a quantity of such literature about just now. One comes upon it everywhere. Interference of that kind, in the affairs of our neighbours, has a colourable resemblance to impertinence. No wonder it is resented, as it undoubtedly is. If the Germans or the French choose to have four or forty million soldiers, who are we that we should presume to lecture them? If they choose to spend their last penny on their armaments, what concern is it of ours? Are we incapable of realising that they may understand their own business better than we, by any possibility, can do? Let us be careful to see that our own house is set in order, leaving other people to attend to theirs.

Criticism of the kind alluded to can do no possible good, for these critics are altogether wrong in supposing, as they constantly seem to suppose, that these mighty armaments continue to exist merely to serve certain political purposes of the various Continental Governments. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The German Emperor is popular with his subjects, first and foremost, because he is every inch of him a soldier. At this moment the German national heart is a soldier's heart, as, when the drums of war begin to sound, the world will quickly learn. The man who, sooner or later, will attain to the foremost place in the confidence of France will be the man who brings her armaments to a condition of the greatest perfection; the French are with their army, practically, to a man. On its behalf, in the most literal sense, are ceaselessly offered up the nation's prayers; all political parties combine to make it the head and front of their hopes and dreams. Something to the same effect may probably also be said of Russia. English philanthropic theorists may find it hard to believe that the military instinct can permeate an entire nation, but the thing is so.

It is not at all impossible that the very mightiness of European armaments has been the determining cause of the continued preservation of the general peace. War used to be an incident. Nations plunged into war with light hearts, and withdrew from it, sometimes, almost as light-heartedly. It is very different now. The mere act of putting a modern army into the field is a severe tax upon national resources. No nation in existence can afford to keep it there for any very considerable length of time. Financial considerations render it indispensable that a great war should be begun and finished in a single campaign, or at most in two. The consciousness of this fact weighs heavily on the minds of the masters of the big battalions. They are aware of what it costs to keep them, as it were, up to concert pitch. They know, too, that when the die is thrown they will stand to lose everything upon its fall, for from the next great internecine strife it is certain that the loser will emerge stripped even of his skin, and but a torso, while it is quite within the range of probability that the victor's gain will actually be represented by a minus quantity. And it is because these considerations have pressed so continually upon them that the die still remains unthrown.

Surely it may be accounted an argument in favour of a huge standing army, if the very fact of its hugeness prevents the unloosing of the dogs of war. If the presence of a large force of police acts as a preventive of riot, while the presence of a small force acts as an incentive, what lover of order would not be an advocate of the former, even though its cost be much the greater? If the French had been aware of the condition of excellent organisation to which the Germans had brought their forces, there might have been no war in 1870. It is because they know it now that they hesitate to fight again. And it is because the Germans are acquainted with the immense forward strides which the French have taken in military matters that they still stand, and wait, and watch. Whatever sentimentalists or theorists may have to say upon the subject, there can be but little doubt that that nation whose naval and military organisation is inferior will have to suffer for it, as a nation, in the end, however far off that end may be. This is not a world in which platitudes hold sway, and it never has been. It is a world which is ruled by the strong hand, and it always will be. We may not like the truth—one, personally, very often finds it an excessively disagreeable thing—but truth is truth for all that.

THE STORY OF A POSTCARD.

IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

It is said that in life it is the unexpected that always happens. Aristotle started the saying; George Eliot quoted it more than once; society at large has accepted the theory as a fact.

Certainly, when Angela Raymond came into the drawing-room the next night in her cool white gown, followed by Patsy bearing a roll of music, the last person she expected to see there was Bernard Devereux. Possibly also she was the last person in the world whom Bernard Devereux expected to see.

Thesiger, who had risen from his chair as she entered the room, glanced at the two rather curiously before he performed the introduction. It was not usual for absolute strangers to exhibit such extreme nervousness on meeting one another for the first time.

"I—I—think I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Raymond before," said Bernard Devereux in great confusion. "Surely we spent some time together at Devereux Hall?"

"I believe we did," said Angela carelessly, "but it is such an immense time ago that I have almost forgotten the incident."

She had recovered her outward self-possession, but her hands were trembling and her pulses throbbing wildly. She hardly dared to look at the man who had managed to win her heart unasked so many years ago.

She sat down to the piano and played softly and slowly, while Thesiger and Patsy romped by the open window, and Bernard Devereux stood by the mantelpiece watching them with an absent air.

Presently Patsy demanded to be taken on to the terrace to see the great harvest moon that hung like a red lamp in a purple sky. Thesiger picked her up and put her out of the window, and then jumped out himself. Devereux and Angela were left alone.

She looked up at the sound of Patsy's shrill little voice outside, and suddenly realised that she and the silent man by the mantelpiece were the only occupants of the room. She stopped playing and shut the piano in a sudden access of nervous agitation. She hated herself for not being able to check all signs of emotion.

"Don't go yet," said Bernard Devereux, in a low voice, as she walked past him with a slight inclination of the head. "I want so much to talk to you."

He hardly knew what he was saying. He had been suddenly confronted by the girl whom, in old days, he had hoped to make his wife. What was she doing in Thesiger's house? Why had he never mentioned her? Above all, why had the Fates allowed him to cross her path again—this woman to whom he had made undisguised love and then left without a word? What had possessed him to come to Thesiger Manor to consult Lyon on some financial business about which another man could have advised him just as well? It looked like the finger of Fate. He must have some explanation.

"It is so long since we met, Mr. Devereux," said Angela, in answer to his halting speech, "that I do not think we have anything in common to talk about."

"We once had," said Bernard, his eyes fixed on her face.

She had improved in these five years, he decided as he looked at her. She had been a pretty girl before; she was now a beautiful woman. The peach-like bloom on her cheeks, the strange light in her big dark eyes, suddenly made him realise that he had never forgotten her. Before he had seen her he had fancied he was cured.

"I don't remember that we 'once' had," said Angela defiantly.

"Don't you? Don't you remember the day I gave you the red rose?" he asked her meaningly.

Indignation lent a glorious colour to her cheeks.

"Are you bent on reminding me of a girlish folly?" she asked bitterly. "It is humiliation enough to me now to think that I ever allowed you to call yourself my friend."

"That is rather severe on me, considering the way you led me on," said Devereux, the bitterness in his tone rivalling hers.

"Led you on? I don't understand you."

"Perhaps you call it by a different name," said Devereux shortly.

She did not reply. Patsy's voice outside the window came nearer. He went on hurriedly.

"I must see you to-morrow and try and get some explanation of this—this—extraordinary meeting. I want to know why you are here, and if—if——"

"I am governess to Mr. Thesiger's children," said Angela, walking out of the room with her head held a little higher than usual. She did not say good-night to him nor offer him her hand.

Later in the evening he interrogated Thesiger on the subject.

"Miss Raymond tells me she is governess here," he said, as he strolled up and down the terrace, cigar in mouth. "I was never more astonished in my life. When I used to meet her at Gerty's, I little thought she would ever come to this."

"She seems very fairly contented with her life, and the children adore her," said Thesiger rather sharply. "Why should you pity her so much?"

"When I knew her she was rich and handsome, and had the world at her feet," said Bernard.

"She is still handsome, if no longer rich."

"Oh, undoubtedly."

"And I dare say she does not regret the world so much after all. I fancy she has been through some episode that has rather embittered her," said Thesiger slowly.

He glanced at his companion in the moonlight, but Devereux had regained his self-possession and sustained the glance unmoved.

"A pretty girl often has 'episodes,'" he said carelessly. "I have no doubt Miss Raymond had scores of them. When her father was known to be shaky about money affairs it was wonderful to see how soon all her admirers dropped off."

Thesiger wondered if the man before him had been one of them.

"I certainly never expected to find her still Miss Raymond," went on Devereux. "She was engaged to a man named Seymour before I left for India. Gerty told me so, but I believe the affair was considered a secret."

"Oh," said Thesiger uninterestedly. "I dare say she has had many exciting experiences."

He flung away the stump of his cigar as he said this, and told his companion abruptly that he was going to turn in, as he felt sleepy. But in spite of his drowsiness Thesiger did not sleep much that night.

He told himself that he was not in love with Angela Raymond, but he admitted that he had meant to ask her to become stepmother to his children. He tried to persuade himself that it was solely in the interests of Patsy, and Dolly, and Dick, that he wanted Angela for his wife. The argument was hardly satisfactory even to himself; but he fancied he had stopped in time. He was not in love yet; he was only very near it. He might go over the precipice at any time, he thought with a grim smile.

The appearance of Bernard Devereux on the scene had checked his plans. He would wait and see how matters turned out. Thinking thus he fell into a troubled sleep.

Devereux met Angela alone the next morning, and asked humbly enough if she would mind his walking with her. She was on her way to the village, having left Patsy, and Dolly, and Dick in the charge of Nurse Murdoch. She replied to Mr. Devereux's request by a brief:

"Oh, by all means, come to the village if you care about it. I had no idea you were so fond of shopping."

"I would do anything to get you by yourself," said Devereux boldly.

He was beginning it again, then, thought Angela. She stiffened perceptibly; not twice in her life did she mean to be treated like that.

"Angela," said Devereux after a short pause, calling her by her Christian name for the first time, "what made you treat me in the way you did?"

"I was not aware that I treated you in any particular way!"

"Do you mean to deny that you let me make love to you?"

She faced him with blazing eyes.

"And you dare to remind me of it? you! you! Oh, I have no words to tell you how I hate you!"

"Indeed," said Devereux, indignant in his turn. "I think that the cause for offence is on my side, not on yours. What do you suppose drove me off to India like that?"

"I presume you were tired of me, and wished to show me that you were," said Angela with a curl of her lip.

He opened his lips to speak, but closed them again. Thesiger had come up behind them.

He did not get another word again with Angela that day. She kept out of his way, and did not even appear in the drawing-room that night as usual. She sent word by Parker that she had a headache.

"Thesiger," said Bernard abruptly as they paced the terrace again that night, "do you happen to know if Miss Raymond is engaged?"

"She was," said Thesiger slowly, holding a match steadily to his pipe, "but she broke it off, I believe, before she came here."

"What was his name?"

"Marsden—Gerald Marsden."

Devereux started slightly.

"What, another one?" he exclaimed bitterly. "I wonder how many of us that girl has fooled?"

"You think she is a flirt?"

"I do—emphatically I do."

"And I think her the most honest,

straightforward woman that ever lived," said Thesiger deliberately.

Bernard Devereux looked at him.

"Then I suppose that you are the last man she has favoured," he said sarcastically. "She generally makes any one who is in love with her believe that she would not even flirt with a curate!"

"You are mistaken," said Thesiger stiffly. "Miss Raymond and I are not engaged. I presume it is possible for a man to esteem and admire a woman without being in love with her."

"It is unusual," said Bernard cynically.

"Ah, that depends upon the kind of woman one meets," said Thesiger, with a half-smile. "You see, you have lived in India."

"Yes, I have lived in India," said Bernard moodily, "and it certainly doesn't tend to give one the best ideas of the sex."

There was silence for a short time, and then Devereux said:

"Are you going to propose to Miss Raymond? I should like to know if the coast is clear."

"Do you want the coast to be clear?"

"Yes."

"Then you had better propose yourself as soon as you like. You shall have the first try. I don't know how you've treated her in the past, Devereux; but I hope you mean to treat her well in the future."

Bernard did not reply. Perhaps his heart was too full to speak.

Angela was presiding over the schoolroom tea the next day when he walked into the room. The children, very sticky and jammy, were clamouring loudly for a romp in the hay-field afterwards. Devereux settled the question for them.

"Yes, be off," he said authoritatively, "and play as long as you like. Miss Raymond will come in a little while."

"I am going now," said Angela, standing up determinedly in order to follow her shrieking charges.

"I beg your pardon, you are going to do nothing of the kind." He shut the door, and stood with his back against it. "Fate has given me the chance of having an explanation with you, and I mean to have it."

She looked up at him rather helplessly. His tone, his look reminded her so vividly of the old far-off days when she had loved him dearly. Was it possible that she could be weak enough to love him still?

"I want to know," said Devereux, looking down at her, "why you broke off your engagement with Alfred Seymour?"

"Alfred Seymour?" Angela put her hand to her head for a moment. "I do not even know whom you mean," she said steadily.

"Oh, you women!" He controlled an irrepressible movement of impatience. "Who do I mean? Why, I mean the man to whom you were engaged when you were staying at Devereux Hall."

"I remember now—a tall, fair man, was he not? But I was never engaged to him."

He looked at her helplessly.

"That night—you remember it, you must remember it, I am sure—that we walked together on the balcony, I made up my mind to ask you to be my wife. Well, Gertrude was a friend of yours. I confided in her, and asked her if she thought I had any chance. I knew she disliked the idea of the marriage for some reason or other, but I trusted her completely. She laughed, and told me that you had been only making a fool of me—that everybody knew it. She told me distinctly that you were engaged to this other man. Can you wonder that I left the next day, almost without bidding you good-bye?"

Angela's face was white now.

"Gertrude told you that?" she said slowly.

"She did."

Angela hid her face in her hands.

"It was a lie—a cruel, wicked lie!" she said passionately. "How could you think that I—that I—would have let you go on as you did if I had been engaged to another man?"

He smiled a little sadly.

"Women have done that sort of thing before now, Angela! It is not a unique experience for a man to go through. I thought it best to cut mine short, and leave without demanding any explanation. I see now that I was a fool."

She did not reply.

"I thought you loved me in those days," he went on. "I could have sworn that you did. And when I remembered everything and thought that all the time you were only laughing at me—well, I thought the only thing to be done was to get away before you had quite broken my heart."

"You never thought that you might have broken mine!" said Angela dully.

"How could I? You seemed so bright and gay—and I believed Gertrude. There was no reason why I should not."

"She wanted you to marry her sister. Every one but you knew that," said Angela; "but it doesn't matter now, it is all so long ago."

She sat looking out of the window, and her eyes were wet with tears.

"Angela," said Devereux, "you were engaged before you came here?"

"Yes, I was. We needn't talk about it. I did it in a moment of despair."

"You did not love him?" jealously.

"No."

"And Thesiger?"

"What about Mr. Thesiger?"

"Is he nothing to you either?"

"Less than nothing," said Angela with base ingratitude.

For the first time during the interview Devereux moved close to her.

"Angela," he said in a low voice, "will you forgive me all those years of doubt and unhappiness? Will you believe that I have never ceased to think of you—and love you? Will you be my wife?"

She looked up at him without speaking. Gently he stooped and kissed her.

"Does that mean that I am accepted?" he asked her. "Fate meant us for each other, Angela, I am sure, or we should not have come together again like this."

She laid her head against his shoulder.

"I have never forgotten you—never once," she said. "I was so wretched and lonely without you. I longed to see you or to hear from you. Oh, it was a cruel time!"

"Gertrude separated us—but she has unwittingly brought us together again," he said, fondly stroking the silky curls. "I think we can forgive even her."

"Gertrude did not bring us together, it was my postcard that did it," said Angela, smiling.

And she told him all about it.

Ten minutes later Thesiger, passing the half-open door, looked in and saw them together. They were too wrapped up in one another to notice him. He went softly away to his study, and began to pace up and down as was his wont when he was excited or distressed.

"Patsy will have to do without a stepmother now," he said to himself. "I shall never ask any other woman to be my wife. Still, I am not in love with her. It is a good thing I stopped in time."

He went to the window and stood looking out. Presently he drew back. Angela and Devereux were passing along the terrace. There was no mistaking the look on their faces. He remained gazing after them lost in thought. Then he roused himself.

"Yes, it is a good thing I stopped in time," he said aloud, "a very good thing. As it is, I am all right."

But the tone was not quite as assured as it might have been.

Now Publishing,
THE
EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER
CONTAINING
Complete Stories by Popular Writers.
PRICE SIXPENCE.
Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.
Next Week will be commenced
A NEW SERIAL STORY,
BY
MARY ANGELA DICKENS,
Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc. etc.,
ENTITLED
PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.
For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Bottling Fruit.—Many people do not take the trouble to preserve fruit without sugar for use in pies and tarts in winter, but in gardens where there is an abundance of fruit, it is a matter of economy to preserve a good supply for winter use. The following method is most successful, and preserves both the flavour and colour of the fruit. First, the bottles must be perfectly clean and dry; next, the fruit should be freshly gathered. Carefully pick off the stalks, and remove any bird-pecked, bruised, or blemished fruit. Take each bottle separately and reverse it over a pinch of burning flower of sulphur until it is well filled with the smoke of the sulphur; allow it to stand in this way a minute or two, to effectually destroy any germ of insect life, or of mould or fungus that may cling to the bottle, and then at once fill it closely with fruit, shaking it down from time to time until full to the brim. Proceed in this way with each bottle, then wrap each in a fold or two of clean cotton or linen cloth, cover with a piece of tile or pan to keep out dust, and pack the bottles carefully in a large vessel of cold water, the bottom of which is lined with a little sweet hay, or three or four folds of linen cloth. Set the vessel over the fire, let it come gradually to boiling point, and let it boil fast until the fruit breaks and falls down well into its juice; as the water evaporates replenish it with more boiling water. Have ready clean prepared bladders, take each bottle, and cover with double bladders (the rough sides of the two folds of bladder should be laid next each other), tightly stretched and tied on with string, tied several times round the neck of the bottle. Allow the cloth to remain on the bottles till next day, that they may cool gradually. When the bladders are quite dry, store the bottles in a cool, dry cupboard. This process answers well with green gooseberries, red currants, raspberries, cherries, plums, damsons, etc. Black currants are nicer if sugar is added in the proportion of six to eight ounces to the pound of fruit.

To Clean Furniture.—There is nothing so good to clean furniture as a woollen rag damped in spirits of turpentine. This takes all the dust and cloud from carvings and panels. When they have been thoroughly cleaned with the turpentine go over the surface again with a flannel dipped in linseed oil, rubbing it well into the wood.

Gracie.—Yes. Crape is coming very much more into fashion now for mourning dresses, and I expect soon to see a great deal of it worn. At the best West End houses you will see many pretty styles for widows' and other gowns. As you remark, Paris is already using crape to a very large extent, and the fashion papers have many drawings of dresses trimmed with it. In buying it is always cheapest in the end to have the best quality, as it does not wear out nearly so quickly as the inferior ones.

Learning to Walk.—Infants should not be allowed to walk until they make voluntary efforts to do so, for when the muscles are strong enough, nature prompts them to imitate the movements they see in others; but after natural walking and running about has been practised during the first few years of life, and sedentary occupations begin to take the place of the active life of the young child, it is desirable that children should be taught to practise walking, and dancing lessons may be given. Children who learn to walk with grace and dignity while they are very young, will retain a good carriage in later years. Children should always be taught to walk in an upright position, with the head up and the chest thrown out. If in young children the chest does not expand properly, the bones grow in length but not in thickness, and bow legs and knock knees may follow, while curvature of the spine, or what is popularly known as growing out of the shoulder, is the frequent result.

To Prevent Sunburn, it is a good plan to wipe over the face before going out, and on returning, with a mixture of one teaspoonful of simple tincture of benzoin in a pint of rosewater. The chemist should be specially asked for the simple tincture, as he generally has to prepare this. The compound tincture is kept in stock, and will therefore be handed to his customer unless he is specially asked for the other; it, however, contains ingredients which instead of being beneficial to the complexion, are injurious to it. A little of this lotion wiped over the face after washing has a healing effect on the skin, and helps to cure roughness as well as redness.

Permanent Discolourations of the skin are sometimes produced by the use of a mustard poultice or plaster, hence these should not be applied to the face or the upper part of the chest of young ladies, as the discolouration caused by them is by no means a trifling matter. Even if removed by various means the marks are apt to return.

Ivory-Handled Knives may be whitened considerably, and kept so, if they are occasionally soaked in alum water. The alum water must boil first, and then cool before the knives are placed in it. Let the knives remain in the water an hour, then remove, and brush with a nail or tooth brush; take a clean linen towel, wet with cold water, wring it as dry as possible, wrap the knife handles in this and let them dry slowly; if they are allowed to dry too quickly from the alum water they will not be satisfactory, but if these directions are carefully followed they will be nice and white.

To Cleanse Silk Fabrics.—For every quart of water needed, pare, wash, and grate one large potato. Put the potatoes into cold water, and let them stand two days without stirring, then carefully pour off the clear liquor into a vessel of a convenient size in which to wash the silk. The washing is done by dipping the silk up and down in the water; if there are spots draw the silk smoothly through the fingers, but do not rub it or allow it to wrinkle. Hang the silk over a line and let it drip nearly dry; then lay it flat on the table, and with a cloth wipe it first on one side and then on the other. If it must be pressed, place it between flannel and use a moderately hot iron. Ribbon can be nicely smoothed by winding it round a large round roller of smooth wood covered with several thicknesses of cloth. If you have new dress silk that is not to be made up for months, by all means get a large smooth piece of round wood to roll it on. Straight breadths of old silk are kept best if rolled in this way.

Boiled Knuckle of Veal and Parsley Sauce.—Take a small knuckle of veal and cut off the shank bone, boil it very slowly until tender. This is a very good dish if boiled so long that the gristle becomes like jelly, but if time is not allowed for this, the joint is hard, and almost uneatable. Serve, liberally covered with parsley sauce, which consists of a rich melted butter, into which is stirred a good supply of chopped parsley. N.B.—Parsley is very easily chopped if it is first washed and then thoroughly dried by being squeezed in the corner of a cloth. Not only does it chop better, but it crumbles over a dish much more freely.

Old Fowls make good eating if they are slowly boiled an hour for each year of their lives, then stuffed and baked, basting them with the liquor in which they were boiled.

Rhubarb and Rice Pudding.—Butter a pie dish, and into it put a shallow layer of scalded rhubarb cut into short lengths. Sprinkle sugar over it, and, if you have it, a little grated lemon peel, then a thick layer of boiled rice, now another layer of rhubarb, rice, etc. Scatter breadcrumbs over the top, with a little butter on them, and bake in a moderate oven, allowing sufficient time for the rhubarb to cook.

Bloater Paste is far cheaper made at home than bought in small pots, and to my mind very superior in flavour. Procure three freshly cured Yarmouth bloaters or kippered herrings, and immerse them in boiling water to remove the skin and take out the backbone. Place the meat in a pan with three ounces of clarified butter, a bit of mace, a teaspoonful of anchovy sauce, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Simmer all together over a slow fire for about ten minutes, then pound in a mortar, and rub through a coarse hair sieve. Fill pots with this preparation, pressing it down firmly. Cover with melted lard, and keep in a cool place for use.

Savoury Hominy.—Soak two large tablespoonfuls of hominy all night in half a pint of warm water on the stove. Place it in a saucepan with the water in which it has soaked, with half a pint of milk, and let it simmer nearly an hour. Stir constantly, then add an ounce of grated cheese, and a seasoning of made mustard, pepper, and salt. Grease a pie dish, and if you have any paste by you, line the dish with it, pour the mixture in, add another ounce of grated cheese, a few breadcrumbs, and over all scatter a few bits of dripping. Place in the oven till the top is browned over.

Stewed Apples.—Peel and core seven or eight small apples, place them in syrup, and stew gently till soft, turning occasionally so they are cooked through. The syrup should be made of half a pound of castor sugar, the juice of two lemons, enough lemon rind to flavour, and simmer till thick. Serve the apples cold on a glass dish with the syrup poured round.

White Soup.—Stew any veal bones you have by you with some scraps of ham. Throw in a turnip, a carrot, and a bunch of herbs. Season the stock with a blade of mace and a little lemon peel. Boil for several hours, then strain through a thick cloth or a colander. When cold remove the fat. Add one pint of milk to every two quarts of stock, and thicken it with flour rubbed into butter. Boil up, and before serving, throw in a little vermicelli.

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.—Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month, with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient, in some cases, may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending cost of postage (sixpence), a reprint of Press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals—British and foreign—and other interesting particulars, including the book containing the "recipe," can be had from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—"Belfast News Letter."

HOW TO BECOME THIN AND WELL.—Mr. F. Cecil Russell, of 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, has issued a very useful book (two hundred and fifty-six pages) on this subject. It deals with the origin of fat, shows the dangers of an excess of fat, and discusses the numerous remedies hitherto adopted for reducing fat. The book, which is well worth reading, contains a large number of testimonials from persons who have benefited by Mr. Russell's process. It is now in the press for the seventeenth edition. Its cost is only six penny stamps. It is most extraordinary how he has quite exploded the theories of the medical profession. He claims that as a person becomes more healthy under his treatment he requires more food, yet his weight is being reduced sometimes at the rate of ten pounds a week on botanical preparations only. Our great Continental therapeutical "big wigs" will have to look to their laurels in earnest. —"Salisbury Times."

DO STOUT PEOPLE LIVE LONG?—This is a question which has occupied the attention of medical authorities from time immemorial. Some argue that the lean kind take longer to shuffle off the mortal coil than their stout brethren. The statistics naturally favour this argument, and no doubt are correct to a great extent, because sufferers from obesity are more susceptible to disease in consequence of the debilitated state of the system when clogged with abnormal adipose tissue; but a curious fact has been overlooked, viz., that corpulence generally commences about the age of thirty-five to fifty, after which time it seems to decrease; therefore, before the proverbial "three score and ten" is reached, the whilom fat man is, by a natural process, again reduced to what may only be called moderate plumpness, and thus cheats the statistician. Stout persons can now, thanks to science, reduce their weight in a most extraordinarily rapid manner, without the slightest injury to their constitutions, or without resorting to those drastic remedies which only operate for a time, or by the continuance of the use of toxical drugs extending over such a period that renders it baneful to the long-suffering patient. An eminent Continental therapeutist recommends the victim to obesity to eat fat meat, while an equally eminent American prescribes lean ditto, and the stomach is to risk an accumulation of serious disorders by swallowing a pint of hot water daily, a most nauseous remedy we should think, and not unattended with danger. The past-master in the cure of corpulence is Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., whose book (two hundred and fifty-six pages), entitled "Corpulency and the Cure," price only six stamps, seems to impress us considerably, for he reduces more weight by his system than the Continental and American physicians, without any of the absurd restrictions which would make life scarcely worth living. He uses simple herbs, the properties of which he seems to possess a more than usual knowledge of, and he makes but little secret of his method, so refreshing after the mystery made of most chemical and herbal concoctions for various complaints.—"Wetherby News."

THE CURE OF CONSUMPTION.—The reports as to the success of Dr. Alabone's treatment continue to be of a most encouraging character, and there can be but little doubt but that he is justified in taking the stand he does. Consumption, he says, can be cured. Let the patient combine with the doctor, let his remedial treatment be conscientiously applied and adopted, and with time and patience no result is too good to be true. Up to this time, even the remote chance of alleviating this terribly insidious and almost invariably fatal disease has sufficed to engross all the energies of the ablest doctors. Koch tried, indeed, to effect a cure; we all know how he failed. Inoculation, certainly, was not to be the one true and only remedy to which consumptive people must look with their longing eyes for help. Consumption is supposed to be incurable after a specified stage has been reached in the progress of the disease. Not so, says Dr. Alabone—and we pause, astonished, expectant. The theory of the causes engendering consumption has been up to this time a field for gigantic research. The ultimate results of the ravages of this most insidious and terrible disease are, unfortunately, only too clear. But though we see cause and effect, and we say, "It is consumption, and the end is—Death," we have remained for the most part ignorant, terribly ignorant, of any remedial possibility to arrest the fatal progress of this most horrible foe of our national life and civilisation. Amongst so much conjecture, so much futile striving, it has remained for Dr. Alabone, of Lynton House, Highbury Quadrant, to find a clue to this riddle. To find it, and to follow it hopefully, persistently. We are pleased to find his treatment is now being successfully adopted by many members of the profession; so that he has succeeded in establishing his undoubted right to the title of a great pioneer. As a most successful specialist in cases of consumption, his position in the world of medicine is absolutely unique. That the result of his method of curative treatment is phenomenal in its results there can be no two opinions. Cases can be multiplied to almost any extent, and authoritatively vouched for, which have been actually cured, even when in an advanced stage of the disease. Dr. Alabone does not, of course, contend for an instant that such cases are always curable where much lung tissue is lost, but he does say, most strongly and convincingly, that even then many cases have been cured. The nature of the treatment which he advocates is set forth ably and concisely in a most interesting work, "The Cure of Consumption, Asthma, and Chronic Bronchitis," by Edwin W. Alabone, M.D., Phil., U.S.A., ex-M.R.C.S. by exam., 1870, Price 2s. 6d.; post free of Author, Lynton House, Highbury Quadrant, Highbury, London, N. The fact that the work is now in its 25th edition (133rd thousand) speaks for itself as to the interest which has been awakened by its publication. The enormous number of responsibly authenticated cases of actual cure which have resulted from Dr. Alabone's method of treating phthisical disease is, in itself, not the least interesting portion of the volume, constituting, as it does, a record of success which there is no disputing. The volume, which is written in a clear, concise style, and in simple, untechnical language, is full of practical suggestion, good sense, and thorough comprehension. It contains a mass of information of vital importance to those suffering from chest complaints. To such as are unable, whether from distance or what not, to consult Dr. Alabone personally, we would strongly commend its perusal. Such sufferers have now, however, the inestimable comfort of the knowledge that their cases can be treated by means of written directions, without the necessity of a personal interview when this is difficult or impossible. That Dr. Alabone has penetrated far, far beyond the futile and half-hearted measures for resisting the insidious advances of this national demon, Consumption, and which have been up to this time the only known means of repelling it, there can be no doubt. With one voice, thousands of his fellow-creatures, sometimes his patients, but now his faithful friends, have already risen up and cried aloud their gratitude. It but remains for the nation at large to show practical proof of its confidence. Discoverers, in all ages, have received too scant recognition. The discoveries of science, but, above all, of medicine, the least known of all sciences, should at least be valued at their proper worth. For ourselves, we wish Dr. Alabone the success that he deserves, and the recognition which will infallibly be his in the end.

"Any sceptic who believes Dr. Alabone to be other than he represents himself, should do him the justice to send for this book and read it. It can be obtained for 2s. 6d. of the author, Lynton House, Highbury Quadrant, London."—"Christian World."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 292.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

IT had been a dull, damp October day. The hours had worn one into another heavily and drearily, weighted, as it were, with the moisture, intangible but all pervading, which seemed to shut out alike healthy air, invigorating light, and that elasticity which these bring to the spirit of mankind. The day was dying now—though it was only four o'clock in the afternoon—and as the light waned; fading as something incongruous and incompatible with the raw, sad atmosphere; along the little river which ran through the small cathedral town up from the flat, grey-looking country, crept a cold white mist. The river ran through the poorest part of the town, and the mist crawled first through slums, passing in at open doors and broken windows, casting a deadly damp where was already the deadly chill of poverty, killing struggling little fires, searching through and through scanty garments to shivering frames. Up from the slums it passed, spreading and growing steadily and imperceptibly, into the busy thoroughfares, chilling the hope and the vigour out of the workers, hushing and blighting as it moved. On through the town to where the shops gave place to houses, little villa residences, through the thin walls and ill-fitting doors and windows of which it penetrated, insidious and all pervading. Out here, where there was little human warmth and little light to temper it, it gathered force and volume, as though the genius of the long brooding day had taken form at last and risen in resistless power. On up the hill it swept, shrouding and blotting out the better houses it encountered, until it reached the summit.

On the brow of the hill, just where the road turned, a green palisade ran along by the pavement enclosing a garden, and some two or three hundred yards further on, a house, which loomed out in the dusk, square and white. Noiselessly and imperceptibly the palisade was blotted out. Up the garden the mist stole, slowly, very slowly, rolling itself out now like some impalpable winding-sheet; creeping on and on until the square white house rose up grey and gloomy from its very midst. Here on the top of the hill the impulse which had rolled it up from the river ceased. It spread no further, except as it grew thinner in the distance and dispersed. It seemed to stop at the white house, round which it hung heavy and clinging. There was the slightest possible stir in the air up here—all insufficient to be called a breeze, all insufficient to break up the mist. But it was enough to stir it slightly, to produce a hardly perceptible fluctuation in its density, to give it a strange effect of stealthy, creeping movement. Round and round the house it seemed to steal, to and fro; pressing itself against the walls; crawling up and along windows and doors; with a haunting suggestion in its shadowy restlessness as of some weird, half palpable presence that sought an entrance.

A few bricks, a pane or so of glass. On the other side of this slight barrier was a picture of placid, commonplace comfort; which, in the very sharpness of the contrast it presented, emphasized into that grotesqueness which is never without a touch of the terrible, the grim suggestion shut out by warm curtains and bright lights. It

was a square room, fairly large. It was furnished as a drawing-room; not as the idea obtains in fashionable London, but according to the canons of country town taste and conscience. The bulk of the furniture was such as might have been bought about thirty years earlier—a large oval rosewood table, heavy upholstered sofa and chairs, a large pier-glass. Superimposed on this foundation was a miscellaneous selection of objects evidently of more recent introduction, and products of that artistic developement on which the latter end of the nineteenth century particularly prides itself; there were sundry bamboo-chairs, a little oak table, a "Liberty" silk fire-screen, and so forth. And these articles were disposed about the room with an absolute absence of taste, which proclaimed that they had been selected on some other principle than that of artistic merit, and that the artistic faculty in their arranger was probably non-existent. The wall-paper was of the much-gilded floral order; the pictures were water-colours, which startled alternately by their unprecedented feebleness and their unnecessary violence. The cottage piano more nearly resembled a nicknack table than a musical instrument; apparently its presence required justification.

But the incongruous ugliness of the room was not its most salient feature. It was dominated and thrown into abeyance by a certain air of solid comfort which pervaded it; an air which obviously owed its origin—and suggested the fact with unmistakeable distinctness—to well-directed housewifely care and common sense. The comfort in question was that commonplace animal comfort which is entirely independent of beauty or refinement, needing only substantial ministration to that physical warmth and ease which constitute it. And it spoke as eloquently in every fold of the ugly red velvet curtains, in every yard of thick, well-swept, barbaric carpet; above all, in every matter-of-fact detail in the arrangement of the whole; as in the strong illumination given by the large lamp and the bright fire on the spotless hearth.

But the point of the background—as of all arrangements of inanimate things—lay in the humanity for which it formed a setting, and which gave the final touch of life and reality to all its suggestions. The room had only one occupant—a woman.

She was sitting at some distance from the fire near the table, and well within the circle of lamplight, with some grey knitting in her hands; and every line of her figure, at once composed and energetic, every decisive movement of her hands, or of her head, as she turned it now and again to look at the clock, proclaimed, beyond all possibility of doubt, that here was not only the mistress, but the mind to which the room owed its character; the personality in which all that it shadowed forth touched the supreme expression.

She was a tall, rather large-boned woman, presumably some fifty years old, well developed and matronly-looking. She wore a brown dress, rather plainly cut after that translation of the fashion of two years back which would be likely to commend itself to a country town dressmaker, and made of a stuff which had evidently been selected with the same keen common sense as to durability, and the same absence of taste, as that evinced in the room in which she sat. It was quite unworn, and conveyed an impression of solid value and suitability; the former characteristic being further borne out by the handsome gold brooch which fastened her collar and the watch-chain visible in the front of her dress. She wore no cap. Her rather coarse black hair was brushed back from her forehead, and arranged in a series of neat and compact plaits at the back; and, except at the temples, where it was considerably worn away, it was very plentiful.

Her face—and when once that was noticed, the hard deftness of her hands also—very subtly reduced the impression of comfort conveyed by her surroundings to an affair of line and rule, the outcome of a vigorous and rigorous sense of fitness, and a determination that things and people alike should be kept up to the mark. It had probably been conspicuously good-looking in its girlish days in a bold, highly-coloured style. The strongly-marked features and the large black eyes were still there; but under the hardening hand of time, all that had rendered them attractive had disappeared. There were few wrinkles; but two deep, perpendicular lines in the forehead and the vigorous set of the rather thin lips gave the whole face a somewhat sharp determination. The eyes, also, were keen and hard, with no beauty, either of depth or sympathy. A lack of sympathy, in fact, a something which, without being coarse in its outward expression, suggested a certain coarseness or bluntness within, was one of the most marked characteristics of the face.

She sat there, never slackening the

mechanical energy of her fingers even when she glanced round, as has been said, at the clock. Even this slight manifestation of restlessness or expectancy seemed a little out of keeping with her personality. By-and-by she rose and poked the fire; strictly for its good and not at all as a satisfaction to herself. She was returning to her seat with a brisk and rather heavy step when the door opened.

"Tea, my dear? It is almost—indeed, I may say it is past five o'clock, is it not?"

The new-comer who spoke these words was a man. He was an elderly man; his hair, indeed, was nearly white; he was short in stature and spare in figure; and the most remarkable point about him at the moment was the contrast between his general bearing and expression and the tone in which he spoke. His small proportions were drawn up, evidently habitually, to their fullest extent; and there was that in the slight inflation of his chest, in the pose of his head, and in his step as he walked across the room, which revealed the fact that here was a man who was accustomed to regard himself, and, indeed, to be regarded, as a person of the utmost importance. The lines about the rather wavering pale brown eyes, innumerable fine wrinkles, spoke of perfect self-complacency. The somewhat loose lips, distinctly uncertain in expression for the moment, alone seemed to harmonise with the manner of his speech; the shape of the chin, which might possibly have borne out the impression conveyed by the mouth, being hidden by a small white beard. His tone presented the singular combination of pomposity, peevishness, and tentativeness, the first-named qualities being conspicuously in the minority. His small and elderly tenor voice seemed to become weaker as he spoke and as he drew nearer to the fire.

He held an open letter in his hand, and as he finished speaking, he returned it to its envelope. It was addressed to "Dr. Vallotson, The Chestnuts."

"Are you thinking of waiting?" he added submissively.

His wife glanced from the tea equipage in the corner, wanting only the tea-pot for perfect completeness, to the clock.

"She ought to be here by this time," she said. "Yes, we will wait for her."

Her voice bore out the suggestion of her face. It was hard and decisive. And Dr. Vallotson subsided into a luxurious easy-chair, in which he established himself with peculiar care for his personal ease, before he spoke again. When he finally broke the silence, he appeared to be unconsciously indemnifying himself for his enforced patience by the contemplation of himself in a more dignified position.

"It has been a very expensive business," he said, fixing his eyes on the fire, and letting his finger-tips rest lightly together as he solemnly pursed up his mouth. "Very expensive, this Girton affair; and as to this foreign travelling—well, I hope Constance knows what a fortunate girl she is."

Mrs. Vallotson glanced at him for a moment with a certain half-contemptuous curve about her lips as of a listener who knows considerably more both of his expenses and his income than does the speaker himself. Then she said composedly:

"It is a good thing for a girl to travel; and I don't suppose Girton did her any harm, either!"

There was a moment's silence, and then Dr. Vallotson fidgeted irritably. The desire for his tea was evidently growing upon him, and peremptorily demanded some kind of outlet. Being as peremptorily forbidden direct expression, it obviously sought relief through some other channel; and in a few minutes he began to speak with almost undisguised peevishness.

"I really cannot see, Adelaide," he said, "what necessity there was for sending North to meet Constance. I feel sure she could have come with perfect safety alone, or a suitable escort could have been found for her by her friends. And I have been exceedingly inconvenienced by his absence."

A moment's silence followed this expression of Dr. Vallotson's opinion. His wife had met his little furtive movements of impatience with absolute calm. The tones of his irritable voice as he began his last speech had left her absolutely unmoved; but during the course of that same speech her face had changed suddenly. For an instant, and only for an instant, everything about it that was hard and unwomanly was intensified until it was almost repellent. Then the tension of the muscles which must have produced this strange effect seemed to relax, leaving her face rather set.

"I do not approve of young girls travelling alone. I do not choose my daughter to do it!" she said drily and mechanically.

"But you do not seem to consider——"

Dr. Vallotson was interrupted. A very neat servant had come noiselessly into

the room, and was now standing by his chair.

"If you please, sir," she said, "there's a message from the Dean's to ask when Dr. Branston will be back."

"From the Dean's!" repeated Dr. Vallotson fussily, lifting himself at the same time with evident reluctance from his easy-chair. "Say I will come down to the Deanery at once, Sarah. Dear! dear!" In the final ejaculations were blent the accents of considerable self-importance and elation, and the regret of a naturally lazy man for ease which must be abandoned.

But as he prepared to rise the servant spoke again.

"They don't want any one at once, sir," she said. "The message is only to say will Dr. Branston step down as soon as convenient after he gets back, and to ask when——"

Quite suddenly, and almost as though the reiterated question were more than she could bear, Mrs. Vallotson interposed harshly.

"You have been told once to-day, Sarah," she said, "Dr. Branston is expected home every moment, as you must know perfectly well! Say that he will call at the Deanery this evening!"

There was a ring in her mistress's voice, and a flash in her mistress's eyes, before which Sarah departed precipitately. And Dr. Vallotson, apparently vaguely conscious of something in his wife's tone which seemed to him in harmony with his own feelings, turned to her with a movement full of vindictive annoyance.

"This is the kind of thing that has been going on all day," he said petulantly. "If I have been asked once in the course of this day when North will be back, I have been asked fifty times. It is exceedingly annoying."

He paused, but Mrs. Vallotson made no comment. She was knitting rapidly, with her attention apparently concentrated on her work, and her face singularly forbidding. Receiving no verbal sympathy, but not apparently feeling himself checked, Dr. Vallotson proceeded to elaborate his expression of irritation.

"That I should be anxious for his return," he said, "is natural enough. I am really beginning to feel the strain of the heavy work, which this holiday of his has thrown upon me, very severely. But it is a matter that cannot possibly affect any one else. I shall make a point of speaking to North on the subject to-morrow."

The somewhat peculiar chain of reasoning which expressed itself in the last words, spoken with much pompous irascibility, passed as unnoticed by Mrs. Vallotson as had the denunciatory tone of her husband's previous observations. As though she, in her turn, were seeking some outlet for a feeling not to be directly expressed, she lifted her eyes suddenly to the clock and said harshly:

"It is getting very late! I hope North has made no mistakes about the trains."

Dr. Vallotson gave a lordly but rather unheeding wave of his hand, as though to intimate that there was every possibility that such was the case. He pursued his own train of thought without a break.

"He has been exceedingly remiss, too, with his correspondence during his absence," he said angrily. "Exceedingly remiss! To my additional inconvenience! You remember, Adelaide, my mentioning the new Cottage Hospital at Hatherleigh to you? They are anxious for some reason or another that North should be at its head."

"Hasn't he answered?" said Mrs. Vallotson, looking up sharply.

"Not a word!" returned her husband. "I forwarded the letter of the committee a week ago—directly after he started, you know—and he has made them no reply. I have been perfectly pestered for the last two days with enquiries as to whether I think he will undertake it. Here is a note which has just come from Archdeacon French, most anxious about it."

Mrs. Vallotson's lips took their most determined line.

"Of course he will undertake it!" she said shortly. "There's no question about it. But it is extremely wrong of him——"

She stopped short. The front-door bell was pealing through the house, and as she heard it Mrs. Vallotson rose, not hurriedly but instantly, and laid down her work. The darkness passed from her face as though the feeling that brought it there were suddenly and absolutely displaced; and she went out of the room with quick, firm steps.

Dr. Vallotson looked after her and settled himself comfortably in his chair.

"Dear child," he murmured pompously. "Dear little Constance! I wonder whether she has grown?"

A moment or two later voices and footsteps made themselves audible in the passage outside, and he turned towards the door as it was pushed open by Mrs. Vallotson,

who was saying, evidently as a conclusion to a speech unheard:

"And you must be hungry, too, I'm sure, child! Come and have some tea directly."

Nothing, evidently, could make Mrs. Vallotson's voice soft, or her face tender; but there was something about her alert decision as she re-entered the room—a satisfaction, a kind of pleased excitement—which changed her very strangely. She did not touch the girl who was following her, nor did she glance round at her as she hastened across the room to the tea-table. But in every line of her face, in every tone of her voice, as she issued quick, terse orders to the servant who was bringing in the tea-pot, there was an intense consciousness of her presence.

The new arrival was a small, thin girl with Mrs. Vallotson's large black eyes; a smooth forehead surmounted, under her travelling hat, by soft, fluffy brown hair; a little nose rather inclined to turn up at the tip; and a brown complexion. She would have been a very pretty girl but for the excessive prominence of a chin that seemed too large for her face. She was a little pale now, as though with fatigue; but her expression and bearing were singularly composed, and singularly self-assured.

She received the embrace with which Dr. Vallotson greeted her with great calmness, kissing him lightly on the cheek in return.

"Thanks, yes, a very good journey on the whole!" she said, in answer to his enquiry. "Oh, no, I'm not tired, thank you, father. The distance from Paris is nothing, you know."

The high-pitched girlish voice was a little self-satisfied, and more than a little supercilious. It harmonised unmistakeably with the curve, evidently habitual, of the rather pretty lips, and the glance of the eyes. But the expression and the manner alike modified — with curious unconsciousness of the fact on the part of their owner—as Mrs. Vallotson spoke from the other side of the room, and the girl turned towards her.

"Here's your tea, Connie," said Mrs. Vallotson. "Take it and sit down there by the fire. That's right! Are you cold? How is it you're so late?"

"What time did you leave London?" added Dr. Vallotson condescendingly.

"The train was late, mother," returned the girl with much less self-assertion in her voice—though here again the modification was evidently quite unconscious. "Nearly half an hour late. Dear me, it is nice to be at home again!"

She was looking at her mother, as she spoke, with a little smile in her eyes which made her face far prettier than did their ordinary critical expression. But Mrs. Vallotson only replied by a brief nod of approbation, though the lines about her mouth were wonderfully relaxed as she turned her attention to the condition of the tea-pot. It was Dr. Vallotson who said:

"Of course! of course! Quite right, my dear! quite right! Let me see, now; how long is it since you were at home? Six months?"

"Ten months," said his wife decisively. "Connie didn't leave Cambridge at Easter, and she went abroad directly the summer holidays began. I think you've grown, Connie."

Connie drew herself up with some dignity.

"I don't think so, mother!" she said rather quickly. "One doesn't generally grow at my age, does one? North said——"

Mrs. Vallotson turned towards her abruptly, a quick contraction as of sudden recollection making the lines in her forehead show deep and clear cut. But the verbal interruption came from her husband.

"North!" he said testily. "Yes, by-the-bye, of course! Where is North?"

"He has come, I suppose?" said Mrs. Vallotson. Her voice rang in harsh contrast with the tone of her last observation, and Constance answered her mother.

"Oh, yes," she said indifferently, "of course. A man met him at the station—one of the men out of Garrett's stores, I think he said—and asked him to go and see his son as soon as he could; and North went with him at once. He asked me to say that he should not be long."

Mrs. Vallotson made no comment. She poured out a second cup of tea for her husband with no softening of the contraction of her brows. But Dr. Vallotson amply compensated Connie for her silence.

"A most preposterous thing to do!" he declared. "Most preposterous! and really almost insulting in North, as though the practice needed his services so urgently that he could not even go through the town without finding work! The practice has done very well without him, as I can assure him, though I have been worked to death! He should most certainly have come home first, and received his instruc-

tions from me. A man from Garrett's stores, did you say?" Dr. Vallotson's cheeks flushed a faint, angry pink as he spoke. "Why, that must be the person who sent for me late last night—all down to Hobart's Court—and evidently a slight case! Of course, I did not think of going. I sent the man on to Smith. If North had had the common courtesy to consult me on the subject, I could have told him so!"

Mrs. Vallotson's eyes were turned upon her husband as he spoke, and their gaze seemed somewhat to discompose him, though she did not speak. He was beating his foot upon the carpet with an uneasy assertion of righteously offended dignity, when Constance, who had been contemplating him with some disapprobation in her eyes, turned her head suddenly.

"Wasn't that the front door?" she said. "I expect that is North."

With a movement that was very sudden and almost violent, Mrs. Vallotson rose, and turned away to place her knitting in a basket on a side-table. As will sometimes happen in moments of even trivial expectancy, no one spoke. Dr. Vallotson continued to beat his foot upon the carpet with a pronounced accentuation of his air of lofty indignation. Constance drank her tea in composed indifference. And it was in the midst of the same silence that Mrs. Vallotson, with her lips so tightly set as to be even slightly paled, came back into the lamplight as the door opened, and a tall, dark young man came into the room. He paused for an instant on the threshold as he became aware of the family group awaiting him, and a constraint which might have been a faint reflection of the rigidity in the dark woman's face turned towards him, seemed to strengthen about him. Then he crossed the room to Mrs. Vallotson.

"How are you, Adelaide?" he said, in a strong and full, but rather formal, tone. "I am sorry to have been delayed."

And then, as she mechanically lifted her cheek to him, he stooped and just touched it with his lips.

FUTTEHPOR-SIKRI.

INNUMERABLE mosques, forts, and palaces scattered over the length and breadth of north-western India immortalise the glorious reign of the Emperor Akbar, the galaxy of monuments culminating round the city of Agra, the pearl of the Imperial crown, and the climax of historical interest. The just and tolerant Akbar became the consolidator of the mighty Mogul monarchy, which under his enlightened sway first attained coherent form and organic unity. The various races and conflicting creeds of Hindostan rendered the work of amalgamation exceptionally difficult, but the walls of separation between tribes and castes were gradually lowered, and the inflexible rigidity of thought which cramps the conservative Oriental mind with the grip of an iron vice was moulded into comparative plasticity by the Great Mogul, who has been facetiously termed "a broad churchman, born out of Greenwich time." Akbar was an enthusiastic student of abstract religion, and though Mohammedan by race, education, and profession, he endeavoured to solve all theological problems by collecting germs of truth from every creed for the developement of a system in accordance with that universal toleration which shrank from destroying any channel cleft by the stream of faith. The evening of Friday, the Moslem Sabbath, was set apart for this attempted reconciliation of varying theory and practice, the complicated task being regarded by the Emperor as a sacred duty of paramount importance. The half-century of Akbar's reign which terminated in A.D. 1600, was the golden age of Mogul India, and the memory of the merciful monarch is enshrined in the hearts of the Hindu people, as well as in the stately piles of stone and marble which he raised for the glory of God and the honour of the empire. Countless traditions have been handed down from this epoch of meridian splendour, and pilgrims still flock to the mighty sepulchre of Sekundra to breathe a prayer for the soul of Akbar, and to lay their garlands of purple Bougainvillea, the sacred "grave-flower" of Northern India, upon the Royal tomb.

The deserted city of Futtehpor-Sikri, twenty-five miles from Agra, and almost untouched by the lapse of three hundred years, is a marvellous architectural memorial of Akbar's reign. The long drive thither is simplified by the expedient known as "laying a dâk," a change of horses being provided at intervals of five miles along the route, and, though signs of human habitation are seldom visible, the new steeds invariably await us at the roadside, tethered to a tree or cropping the rank herbage until the native horse-keeper wakes up from a siesta in the shade to act as charioteer for the next stage of the journey. The dews of dawn still sparkle on the drooping branches of neem-tree and tamarind, and a pink flush

stains the blue transparency of the morning sky as we enter the continuous avenues which extend from Agra to the forsaken capital. An occasional break in the line of trees reveals a verdant glade framed in sombre jungle, and graceful antelopes gaze at us with startled eyes as we skirt the flowery pasture from which they bound lightly away to vanish in the woodland shadows. The little brown "guruli," a hybrid of lizard and squirrel, darts across the road, and green parrots chatter sleepily from the boughs overhead, where they roost among the rustling leaves, feathers and foliage being indistinguishable from each other save where a scarlet crest peeps out from a sheltering wing.

At length the dazzling sunshine blazes fiercely upon a crimson mass of palaces, walls, and minarets, crowning a perpendicular rock of identical colouring which rises abruptly from the fertile plain, and the stupendous ramparts of Akbar's deserted capital glow like blocks of jasper and ruby in the golden radiance of the Indian morning. Futtehpor-Sikri, the Windsor of Agra, and the favourite residence of the Great Mogul, was abandoned in compliance with the request of the anchorite whose reputed sanctity and prophetic insight first attracted the Emperor to the isolated crag which contained the hermit's cell.

Akbar possessed every blessing that Heaven could give, with one exception, and this, though the dearest wish of his heart, was withheld. All his children had died in infancy, and no heir remained to the throne of the Mogul Empire, now at the zenith of power and fame. The monarch at length resolved to court the favour of Allah by undertaking a pilgrimage on foot to the distant shrine of Mounedeen, a Moslem saint buried in the city of Ajmere, three hundred miles from Agra. The Sultana, by virtue of her position as "first among the Queens," accompanied her Imperial spouse, and the whole length of the road was covered with costly prayer-carpets, and screened with embroidered "purdahs" of glittering "kincob," in preparation for the Begum's penitential journey. Lofty towers were erected at distances of six miles apart, as halting-places for the night, where the Royal pilgrims were received with the honour due to their exalted rank, and every device of Oriental luxury was called into requisition to smooth the rugged way, and to turn the thorns of penance into the roses of peace. When the Imperial pair arrived at the goal of their journey, the marble dome of Mounedeen's shrine gleamed with mystic beauty through the moonlight which bathed the sleeping city in a silver flood, and in the hush of night which brooded over the sacred spot, Akbar, wearied with travel, and exhausted by the fervour of his devotions, fell into a deep slumber as he lay prostrate in prayer before the tomb. The saint whose aid he had invoked appeared to him in a dream, and commanded him to retrace his steps to the rock of Sikri, where Sheik Salem Chisti, a holy fakir, would plead the Imperial cause with Allah.

Akbar obeyed the mysterious counsel, and the Begum took up her abode in a gorgeous pavilion erected on the rock, until the birth of the promised heir.

In due time she became the mother of Jehangir, the future Emperor, and Akbar, in the warmth of the gratitude which filled his generous heart, determined to build a splendid palace on the cliff as a memorial of his granted prayer. A superb edifice of red sandstone veined with marble arabesques soon arose on the terraced hill; the Prime Minister and courtiers followed the example of their sovereign, and a noble group of mansions environed the Imperial palace, dominated by the clustering domes of the Royal mosque, which formed the climax of the impressive picture.

An artificial lake cooled the heated atmosphere of the sun-scorched precipices, and the new city was enclosed within a circuit of six miles by a frowning rampart of battlemented walls. The solitude of the fakir's retreat was rudely disturbed, and the lonely rock to which no sound ascended from the plains below now echoed to the clang of martial music, the rattle of arms, and the heavy tread of the Royal elephants, as the splendid retinues of the Imperial Court filled the summer capital with glittering pageantry. Veiled ladies were borne along the streets in curtained litters by attendant slaves; Ministers of State held earnest converse in the marble arcades which flanked the great quadrangles of the Royal palace; merchants from the Persian and Caucasian frontiers of the Mogul Empire flocked into Futtehpor-Sikri with strings of camels laden with all the treasures of the mystic East; and the great Khan near the central gate was thronged with guests from every part of India, attracted by the fame of the wonderful city which appeared like the sudden creation of an enchanter's wand upon the solitary rock. The heart of the old hermit whose media-

tion had led to this unforeseen result was filled with dismay; prayer and penance failed to bring their wonted solace to his troubled soul, and his meditations were distracted by the crowds which visited his cave in order to behold the benefactor whose intercession with Heaven had procured an heir to the throne. The increasing stir and tumult of the city's life as it revolved round the brilliant court of the great Mogul distressed and bewildered the saintly ascetic, destined to know by bitter experience "the curse of granted prayers." In despair he demanded an interview with Akbar, who was accessible even to the meanest of his subjects, and willing to bestow unlimited favours on the holy recluse to whom he owed such a heavy debt of undying gratitude.

This sacred obligation was severely tested when the venerable fakir declared with unrelenting firmness that either he or the Emperor must depart, the necessity for this momentous decision having been disclosed by the special revelation of Allah. Akbar, whose reverence for the anchorite was equalled by that submission to the Divine will which is the religious aspect of Mohammedan fatalism, at once consented to remove his court rather than to turn the blessing of Heaven into a curse by driving away the saint whose presence sanctified the rock. An unexpected difficulty in the water supply of Futtehpor-Sikri may possibly have simplified this immediate determination, and the countless thousands of slaves at the Imperial disposal rendered the erection or desertion of a city a matter of little importance, especially in these palmy days of Akbar's reign, when the wealth of the Mogul Empire was practically inexhaustible.

The absolute power of a despotic monarchy was exemplified in the building of Agra, a task accomplished with miraculous rapidity, and when the white domes and tapering minarets of this dreamlike city of Arabian Nights soared above the darkness of the encircling woods, Akbar removed zenana and Court to the future metropolis of his empire, and Futtehpor-Sikri was abandoned for ever.

A mass of crumbling ruins lies at the foot of the rock; rank vegetation pushes through the stones of dislodged foundations, and loosens the domes and pillars of friable sandstone at the side of the road as we pass through the vaulted gateway built in the thickness of the frowning walls. The highway winds through this outer quarter, which contains the decaying Khan, with its vast range of camel stables and numerous bazaars, to the magnificent sandstone portal of the city proper. The marble tracery of the massive crimson arch bears the following inscription in Persian characters—the sacred language of Islam—"Jesus has said the world is but a bridge over which thou canst pass, but whereon thou mayest not linger to build thy dwelling."

This legend is said to have been imparted to Akbar by his Christian wife, Mariam Begum, a Portuguese captive brought by him from a conquered city of Western India, and so greatly beloved by the Emperor that he ordered her tomb to be placed close to his own among the cypress avenues of Sekundra, where the sepulchres of the Mogul Queens surround the stately mausoleum of Akbar. The Christian motto bears a double significance on the threshold of the forsaken city, which was erected with incredible speed, inhabited for twelve years, and then deserted for ever.

To the left of the gate stands Akbar's office, a solid-looking building in perfect preservation, where the State business of the Empire was transacted, and to which emissaries from the different provinces resorted daily with their sealed despatches for the Imperial consideration. The office was erected close to the gate in order to prevent even a momentary delay in the delivery of a missive or the return of a messenger, and the building is now used as a rest house for visitors to Futtehpor-Sikri. A native "khansamah" ministers to the wants of the strangers, and deftly unpacks our basket of provisions for breakfast—a necessary preliminary to any exploration of the city after the long drive in the keen morning air. A spacious quadrangle extends between the arched gateway and the "Dewan-i-Am," or Hall of Public Audience, a noble sandstone structure with a vaulted roof supported by clustering columns. The superb central pillar expands above the capital like a spreading palm-tree, and suggests the upholding column of a cathedral chapter house. The broad ledge formed by the capital, and encircled by a balustrade of perforated stone, was the lofty judgement-seat of the Emperor, where the gorgeous divan was placed when the Great Mogul occupied this exalted position above the heads of the surging crowd which filled the hall beneath with a glittering mass of motley colour. This great audience chamber was open to high and low, rich and poor, of every nation, tribe, and caste within the

wide area of the Mogul Empire; and four red slabs on the marble pavement, indicating the different points of the compass, signified the Imperial desire to administer justice with absolute impartiality to every suppliant from north or south, east or west.

Exquisite marble sculpture adorns the smaller "Dewan-i-Khas," or Hall of Private Audience, and the adjacent palace of the Prime Minister is so encrusted with carving that scarcely an inch of the stone remains undecorated. The abode of his only daughter is still more elaborate, and the skilful execution of the intricate design, which resembles a filmy fabric woven by Oriental looms, renders this bijou dwelling an artistic poem in stone.

The Imperial palace contains a labyrinth of lofty halls and sculptured galleries beyond the guard-rooms and sleeping chambers which face the outer court. One wing of the vast edifice is closed to the public, but we wander at will through the maze of State apartments, unutterably dreary in their dusky and decaying splendour.

In the Royal "hall of repose" Akbar's colossal bedstead of red sandstone with sculptured pillars still occupies its accustomed place. Like David of old, the great Mogul climbed up into his bed, a broad flight of stone steps assisting him in this gymnastic feat, though a final leap was required to land him safely in the gigantic four-poster. External stairs ascend to the red arcades and fantastic kiosks of the level roof, where shadowy cloisters offer cool retreats from the burning sun and extensive views of the surrounding country. Indigo, poppy, jute, and tobacco alternate with the pale green of springing corn, and the vivid emerald of waving rice. The metallic tints of castor-oil plants glisten against the black belts of jungle, and innumerable tombs dot the wide expanse of rolling plain with grey domes and pillared porticoes; for Northern India, like ancient Egypt, is thickly strewn with memorials of departed greatness. The blue waters of the Jumna flow in a shrunken current through a waste of sand, and the scene, though destitute of actual beauty, suggests the impressive idea of infinity which is only conveyed by a level landscape viewed from a lofty height. When the canopy of heaven glows with the rose of dawn, the gold of sunset, or the spiritual radiance of the moonlit Indian night, these boundless horizons are transfigured into unearthly loveliness, and the sensitive mind of Akbar, responsive to every high and holy influence, found unfailing refreshment in the peaceful contemplation of Nature when released from the overwhelming anxieties of State.

In the pavilion which was used for the transaction of private business concerning the Imperial household, the delicate tracery of lancet windows excluded heat and glare; and the enamelled walls, inlaid with representations of blossoms, birds, and fruit in lifelike beauty of form and colour, show that the Emperor's mind was practically unrestrained by the letter of the law of Islam, which forbade the artist to reproduce by brush or chisel the exact similitude of any created object. In obedience to this stringent command, even the floral arabesques which constitute a distinctive feature of Mohammedan architecture are conventionalised on mosque and shrine, to suggest the spirit rather than the reality of flower or foliage.

The Royal Mosque of Futtehpor-Sikri faces a cloistered quadrangle with massive colonnades supporting a broad red sandstone roof, protected by a perforated parapet, and surmounted by a host of tiny cupolas. The barbed battlements of the outer wall suggest the former presence of those necessary defences which rendered every Eastern mosque and palace a possible fortress. The vermilion vault of the colossal archway, which is wreathed with texts from the Koran inscribed on scrolls of snowy marble, resembles a lofty tower, and the majestic dome, lightly poised as though a touch would send it floating away into space, soars into the cobalt blue of the Indian sky with those aerial curves of Mogul architecture which idealise every ponderous mountain of marble into a mystic sphere of silvery cloud, like "the unsubstantial fabric of a dream." Bats flap dusky wings in cavernous arches; swallows build their nests in the niches of alabaster, mihrab, and crumbling wall. The sound of footsteps on the broken pavement echoes mournfully through the haunted silence of the deserted mosque, and the shadowy twilight teems with ghosts and memories. The slight traces of decay render the idea of ruin wholly inapplicable to this forsaken sanctuary, and the entire city of Futtehpor-Sikri conveys such a strong impression of recent occupation, that the mind of the spectator involuntarily pictures a vague possibility of beholding the tide of time flow back as by a miracle, to fill the lonely scene with pristine life and movement.

Near the fountain used for the ablutions of the worshippers before they entered the

mosque, the alabaster shrine of Sheik Salem Chisti stands out in white relief against the crimson stone of portico and peristyle. Mother-of-pearl arabesques etherealise the fairy fretwork of the fakir's monument into the opalescence of moonlight shimmering on fragile wreaths of driven snow, and screens of perforated marble enclose this gem of Mogul art with white veils of filmy lace. Silken embroideries curtain the interior and drape the turbaned tomb, round which fanatical looking Dervishes chant unceasing prayers from jewelled service-books provided by Akbar, who erected this exquisite memorial of the saint whose counsels he revered as heavenly inspirations.

The death of the fakir occurred four years after the evacuation of the city by the Mogul Court, and though the desertion of Futtehpor-Sikri was permanent, the hermit's tomb became a place of perpetual pilgrimage.

The shadows lengthen across the noble quadrangle, and the deep red piles of sandstone from the inexhaustible quarries of Sikri glow with a lurid light, which bathes the mosque in a sea of fire and flushes the fairness of the snowy shrine. The dark foliage of an ancient banyan-tree near the crimson façade accentuates the wealth of colour, and we can imagine the glory of the living picture which was ruthlessly torn from this gorgeous frame by a fanatical caprice obeyed as a divine command.

The ordinary restrictions of an Imperial zenana were relaxed at the summer capital, and the Great Mogul permitted his Queens to occupy separate mansions, which they were at liberty to decorate as they chose. These supplementary palaces grouped round the Imperial residence indicate by their diversity of architecture and embellishment the nationality and creed of every occupant. The turreted house of the Hindu Begum, with frieze and cornice of tutelary deities carved in high relief against the elaborate floral decoration of the red walls, illustrates the sensuous Hindu style, void of aspiration and overladen with ornament.

The sculptural divinities which adorn this miniature palace were mutilated by Jehangir, the iconoclastic son of the tolerant Akbar, whose fanatical successor deliberately wrought this ravage by going, hammer in hand, through the city, to deface all carven imagery which represented created life in natural form.

The palace of the Turkish Queen stands in friendly proximity to that of her dusky rival, and the chastened beauty of a purer architectural style contrasts favourably with the riotous luxuriance of native art. The abode of the Persian Begum, with interwoven scrolls twisting through the floral embroidery of the blood-red stone, exemplifies the cosmopolitan sympathies of Akbar, whose impartiality conceded to the fair Zoroastrian the privilege of proclaiming her faith on lintel and door-posts by numerous texts from the Zendavesta, the sacred scripture of the ancient Persians.

The Dervishes who officiate at Sheik Salem's shrine have located themselves in the Persian Palace, where they hold a primitive school for the inculcation of that wonderful oral teaching, which, by a process of constant repetition, impresses the precepts of the Koran so indelibly on mind and memory that the maxims of the Prophet, whether for good or evil, impregnate the character of the scholar. To this laborious but successful system of religious education, which moulds and formulates idea, thought, and speech, history attributes the living power of Islam.

Extreme simplicity marks the palace of Akbar's Christian wife, Mariam Begum, but a fading fresco of the Annunciation on the external wall shows that the beautiful Portuguese captive retained her early faith even amid the incongruous environment of her anomalous position in the Imperial zenana. The lily in the angel's hand is still visible among the blurred outlines of the peeling plaster, and symbolises the traditional character of the Christian Queen, torn from home and kindred by the fortunes of war, but retaining "the white flower of a blameless life" in her compulsory exile to a luxurious Oriental Court.

A touching story is told of Mariam's intercession with Akbar for the life of his Egyptian Queen, captured by the negro guards of the zenana as she quitted the Palace of Agra at nightfall in a wild attempt to escape with a former lover. The gentle influence of the Christian wife, who braved the extreme penalty of the law which forbade question or comment on any Imperial decree, prevailed over the wrath of the outraged monarch, who yielded to the tears and prayers of Mariam, a concession hitherto unheard of in the annals of despotic power. The house of this favourite wife now serves as the bungalow of the Government Archæologist, engaged with his little band of pupils in an exhaustive survey of Futtehpor-Sikri. As we wander through the vaulted chambers or rest on the stone sill of the latticed balcony from whence Mariam, like a caged

bird, beheld the golden glory of the western sky which overhung her childhood's home at Goa, the bond of human sympathy unites past and present with links unrecognised in the dwellings which recall the Queens of alien race and adverse creed. The story of Mariam invests the forsaken city with pathetic interest, and the memory of Akbar's Christian bride lingers round the scenes of her captivity, though the personal records of the Oriental Begums lie buried and forgotten beneath the dust of ages.

The group of domestic architecture terminates with the Hide-and-Seek Palace, a labyrinthine edifice built for the familiar pastime known in India as "Luka-luki," and played by the Great Mogul and his zenana with the zest exhibited by children of an English home at Christmas time. The principal feature which distinguished the Indian version of hide-and-seek, when the fun waxed fast and furious, was the gradual disrobing of the fair players until they were despoiled of the flowing veils and embroidered shawls which impeded their activity in the game.

History fails to record whether the sacred person of the Great Mogul was exempt from the unceremonious treatment bestowed upon the Queens, and the problem remains unsolved. When the dignities of State were laid aside for the boisterous frolic of the Hide-and-Seek Palace, Akbar's innate sense of justice may have suffered the bevy of Royal ladies to confiscate scarlet mantle and jewelled turban in return for the spoils of filmy muslin and gorgeous cashmere which he flung about the hall, rolled into balls, or twisted into nooses wherewith to entangle flying feet, while vaulted roof and echoing corridor rang with shouts of merriment.

A court paved with black and white marble in the fashion of a gigantic chessboard was used for the game of Pachesi, another favourite recreation of the Great Mogul, who witnessed the mimic combat from the red throne of a stone platform, where the Ministers of State gathered in a brilliant crowd round their Imperial master. The game was played with living pieces, and each player was accompanied by sixteen beautiful slaves, every set of four being attired in a contrasting colour. The rich robes of red, yellow, white, and blue transformed the great court into a shifting kaleidoscope of dazzling hues, and the contest was decided when four pieces were successfully manœuvred into the centre of the board, the thirty-two fair maidens then becoming the victor's lawful prize.

Beyond the Imperial Mint, strong as a castle keep in the impregnable solidity of massive masonry, lies a maze of red buildings interspersed with baths, tanks, fountains, and tombs. The uncompromising outlines of the noble architecture emphasized by the vivid light, and unsoftened by clinging ivy or waving fern, project the bygone years of Akbar's reign into the present time with an abrupt distinctness unknown amidst the crumbling ruins of Western lands, where the dim vista of buried centuries seen through broken arch or hoary aisle, and veiled in the haze of an idealised dreamland, forms an absolute contrast to the startling realism of this Indian past.

From the towering Elephant Gate, an integral part of every Royal city under Mogul sway, a broad road paved with many-coloured pebbles in an intricate design leads to the mighty Elephant Tower, a unique feature of Futtehpor-Sikri. This colossal monument is the tomb of Akbar's favourite elephant, and the massive crimson tower bristles from base to summit with imitation elephant tusks of white chunam. The upper rows are said to be real, but not even the boundless wealth of the Mogul Empire could sanction the lavish waste of costly ivory involved in covering the entire surface of the huge building. The Elephant Tower is a magnificent relic of barbaric dominion, and under the weird shadow of the jutting tusks stone inscriptions mark the burial-places of numerous elephants, and the humble graves of mahouts and attendants on the Royal animals, always regarded by their keepers with superstitious veneration. Imposing tombs of courtiers and State officials, surrounded by the gravestones of slaves who died in the service of the households, rise on rocky plateaux, or occupy green enclosures planted with cypress or banyan, and the wide extent of the forsaken city seems the vast sepulchre of a living past.

The wild beasts of the jungle, when driven from their forest lairs by tempestuous rains, seek shelter in these desolate halls, and peacocks flashing through the air on rainbow wings, draw their lustrous green and golden trains along the red terraces and marble balustrades of Akbar's palace, still frequented by these Royal birds of Mogul India as in the bygone days of Imperial power and pride. When the sun sinks below the horizon and the shadows

of the short Indian twilight, known as the "Dum-i-Gurg," "the grey wolf's tail," veil earth and sky, the wild cry of the jackal echoes through the deepening gloom of the mysterious city, and a chorus of frenzied shrieks from the pack in the forest responds to the unearthly voice which gives the keynote of the weird concert. As we descend the rugged cliffs in the swift-falling night a waning moon gleams above the visionary dome of the Royal Mosque, and then sinks below the horizon like the glory of that long-past day when the green banner of conquering Islam waved triumphantly above the red towers of the forsaken city which still crowns the lonely rock of consecrated Sikri.

DIVINATION BY OLD BOOTS.

A FEW weeks ago the "Pall Mall Gazette" told us that "a French savant, jealous of the success of palmistry, had invented a new science which he calls 'Scaphology,' by which he is able to decipher the characters of people by the manner in which they wear out their boots." The definition is not as correct as could be wished, for the new science is called, not Scaphology, but Scarpology, and its inventor is not a Frenchman. Indeed, it is just possible, and not improbable, that he is a myth, and that both he and his new method of divination have no existence except in the vivid imagination of some Parisian journalist, who wanted a new sensation for his Sunday's "Chronique."

At all events, it is from French papers, and those not of the most serious cast, that we are able to gather all we know about Scarpology. On their authority we learn that Scarpology was invented by a Dr. Garré, of Basle. He is a Swiss savant who, many years ago, found himself in want of a hobby. Postage stamps stirred no responsive emotion in his bosom; nor was he drawn towards first editions, old china, mezzotint engravings, snuffboxes, book plates, or any of the ordinary forms of "collector's mania." He might—like the book agent's uncle in one of Mark Twain's stories—have collected repeating echoes; but echoes, in a country which is nearly all mountains, are a drug in the market. Possibly, as a good Bâlois, he might have felt a desire to "Grangerise" the Life of Erasmus, or collect the drawings of Holbein the younger; but those hobbies have not the merit of being original, and have the disadvantage of being very expensive.

At last the happy thought flashed across his mind—"Old Boots." Of course, there had been collectors of boots and shoes, but, even at the best, they had been but mere spiritless drudges content to gather together so much fashioned leather or other materials, and when they had labelled their acquisitions —"Cothurnus of a Roman actor: temp. Nero; very rare"; or, "Slippers believed to have been worn by Mary Stewart at Fotheringhay Castle"—their moderate ambition was satisfied. It was for him, a modest Swiss Doctor, to prove himself the Prophet of Old Boots, and show that there was a soul in them, though there might be very little sole to them. In short, it was Dr. Garré's opinion that every man's boots would bear the impress given to them by the wearer. If that wearer climbed the steep and thorny way to heaven, or if, recking not his own rede, he trod the primrose path of dalliance, the nature of his journeyings left its mark upon the coverings of his extremities. It seems not unlikely that the first inkling of the new science may have come to the Doctor as he wended his way some morning down the long corridors of one of the big hotels of his native land, and noticed the different types of boots and shoes placed at the doors of the chambers of the yet slumbering guests. At all events, the seed, however dropped, had fallen on fertile ground.

Dr. Garré's first care was to procure from each of his friends and relatives, male and female, a pair of half-worn boots or shoes. These he supplemented with others that had belonged to well-known personages, or to prominent citizens of Basle who had paid the debt of nature, and whose effects had been brought to the hammer. Gradually he amassed the finest collection of "chaussures" ever known. They were all neatly catalogued, and in most cases some particulars as to the character of the original wearer were known to the collector. When his shelves were quite full, the Doctor set to work to classify his acquisitions. He sorted out those that were worn evenly, those that were worn on the inner edge, those that were worn on the outer edge, and those that were down at heel. By arguing from the known to the unknown; by comparing, deducing, and contrasting, he at last thought himself able to lay down the broad lines of a science. He passed long hours amidst his old boots, amplifying and extending the rules he had discovered, inventing fresh ones, and accounting for contradictions.

He has called his new science Scarpology,

possibly from the Italian word Scarpaccia, an old shoe, the diminutive of Scarpa. He claims for it that it is quite as "exact" as phrenology or cheiromancy. Broadly stated, the canons of the art seem to be somewhat as follows. If the soles and heels are worn down evenly, and there is no undue tendency to thinness in any part, Dr. Garré is able to assert that the wearer was a steady, respectable, methodical business man, of regular habits—a man of even temper, seldom or never stirred by passions. If it is a bottine that is thus evenly worn, it belonged to some chaste and unexpressive she of simple tastes and constant mind; one who is content to never wander from her own clean-swept hearth, and who would betray no emotion if an earthquake brought her choicest Worcester tea-set rattling from its shelves.

So far it may be said that Scarpology teaches us nothing that an averagely acute observer could not presuppose for himself, without the unpleasant task of critically examining some hundreds of pairs of dilapidated foot-gear. It is, however, in those far more frequent cases in which the sole on one side is worn to a wafer whilst on the other it preserves its normal thickness, and the heel is sliced off to a wedge, that the methods of Dr. Garré come in with the most telling effect. "Some is born with bow-legs from the first," and, naturally, those persons will tread on the outside edge of their shoes. Such persons, says Dr. Garré, are obstinate and headstrong. They are ambitious, and ready to undertake any scheme in which they believe there is a chance of profit. In fact, if the sole and heel are much worn along the entire length of the foot, the wearer of the boots or shoes is hardly to be differentiated from an adventurer. This seems rather rough on sailors, who are often bow-legged, and who can only be termed adventurers in the strictly reputable sense of the word. In the case of landsmen the theory has some foundation. Were not Mr. Quilp, Rumpelstiltskin, and the Yellow Dwarf all bandy-legged? So must have been Wayland the son of Wate, the sinews of whose feet were cut by King Nidung. Dr. Garré's theory is confirmed to some extent by the axiom of another observer, who says that you should never trust a bandy-legged man who is deaf in the left ear. The women who tread on the outside edge of their feet have the same character as the men, says the Basle Doctor, but in a minor degree.

Naturally the converse of these propositions holds good in the case of knock-kneed people who tread on the "inside edge." They are weak and irresolute, and fall an easy prey to their bow-legged brethren. If the men are but a feeble folk, however, the women are modest and sweet-tempered, which is perhaps a set-off against the inability to play "principal boy" in a burlesque. There are of course gradations between the two extremes of the full edges which the scarpologist can account for to his own satisfaction, but which would take too much space to describe here. Turned-up toes, like turned-up finger-tips, mean improvidence or extravagance, and even "uppers" have a story to tell. In one point, however, we think the Doctor has allowed his scientific zeal to outrun his worldly wisdom. Jealous husbands, who think that their wives' "tootsicums" have strayed from the paths of wifely duty, can have, it is said, their worst suspicions confirmed or dissipated by simply showing the scarpologist a pair of the suspected matron's bottines. If there be any analogy —beyond that of mere spelling—between Balmorals and bad morals, the Doctor would do well to keep his information to himself. Even scarpologists are but fallible, and a hasty judgement on a worn-out sole might cause some Bâlois Othello to smother some innocent Helvetian Desdemona, when perhaps the fault was due to some defective bit of leather. Even if they did not lead to tragedy, the verdicts of the vaticinator would "breed fruitful hot water for all parties," and we should be rejoiced to hear that the Doctor had never practised, or had abandoned a branch of his art that was fraught with so much danger. In other respects the so-called science is an innocent form of tomfoolery. It is not likely to attract many followers — outside the inventor's native city, at least—and will, in a few weeks or months, be, like many another gaud from the booths of Vanity Fair, relegated to the dim and vast domain of Forgotten Trivialities.

THE FLAG.

(A FACT.)

A WILD street fray in the Cuban town, where each
fought for his own right hand,
When the cruel yoke of the "martial law" lay heavily
on the land;
A clash and a clang of meeting swords, a stab and a
dying groan,
A scatter of crowds from a rescue nigh, and an
Englishman left alone.

An Englishman who scorned to fly, when pity bade him stay,
To strive to staunch the blood that drained the victim's life away;
But the angry soldiers haled him hence. The lurking murderer said
He had seen the stranger strike the blow, ere he feigned to raise the dead.

Short is the judgement, swift the doom, where the sword is lord of life;
"Death!" said the General, ere he rode to another scene of strife.
"Death, at to-morrow's noon," and scarce rich bribe of English gold
Won, that the Consul of England's Queen of her subject's plight were told.

Well "Crawford" read the perilous time, well knew the desperate need.
Something he hid in his breast away, and he bade his people speed;
With cross, and medal, and uniform, all that he had of state,
He went to snatch his countryman, an he could, from coming fate.

He stood, the innocent Englishman, bound hands and bandaged eyes,
Waiting the shot that would knell his death to Cuba's pitiless skies,
When Crawford reined his panting horse close to the judgement place,
And prayed in eager, stately words, of the grim tribunal, grace.

Courteously spoke the Captain there, murmured regretful speech;
The chief was gone, the sentence passed, short shrift would serve for each,
If Don Leon's verdict was not wrought out to the bitter end.
"At least permit," the Consul said, "my farewell to my friend?"

"Haste thee," reluctantly was said, and hand in breast he strode,
Where the doomed man waited quietly to yield his soul to God;
Drew forth and flung the Union Jack over the captive's head,
"Now, shoot at England, he who dares," proudly her servant said.

And no one dared; too far and free the "meteor flag" has flown,
Its simple presence was enough to claim and save its own!
And fair, and free, and fearlessly, still may our banner stand,
To rally round it all the best and bravest of our land.

THE BEAU'S STRATAGEM.

A COMPLETE STORY.

My friends, of course, declare that I simply got my deserts and was fittingly punished for my duplicity. I beg to differ from my friends. In the first place, it was not duplicity, but only diplomacy; in the second, all's fair in love, and my little stratagem was a very innocent one, after all. It is true that I do not really relish the society of children, whose diversions are too boisterous to suit the spick-and-span neatness of costume on which I pride myself; but what of that? I was ready to do or say anything that might help me to gain Miss Merton's good opinion. Consequently when she asked if I liked children, I replied without hesitation in the affirmative, simply because I thought that was the answer most likely to please her; and I venture to affirm that if these same moral friends of mine had been in my place—"all in a garden fair" with the girl I loved, on a beautiful evening in early summer—they would have done as I did. A lover is a licensed liar, and, therefore, it was without a scruple that I uttered a prompt, enthusiastic "Yes," and waited for my reward in the shape of a smile or a few approving words. But somehow my manner failed to convince Miss Merton, for she looked at me somewhat incredulously.

"Really?" she enquired dubiously.

"Really and truly," I replied, sticking stoutly to my guns. "Does it seem so strange to you?"

"Well, it does," she admitted frankly. "I had an idea young men didn't care much for children, as a rule."

"Then I must be an exception, for I am passionately fond of them," I said complacently, with an air of conscious superiority to the ordinary young man.

"I'm glad to hear it," she answered, smiling slightly; "for we'll be able to gratify your taste very soon."

"Oh, indeed? How is that?" I asked, in what was, I hope, a tone of pleased surprise.

"Dick and Floss—my little brother and sister, you know—come home to-morrow. They have been staying with their aunt in London while we were grappling with all the terrors of 'moving'; but now that we've quite settled down, of course they're coming home. They are really nice little things, and, if you honestly do like children, I think you'll soon become fond of them."

"I'll adore them, I feel sure," I answered, striving to look as if I believed myself and to speak with easy confidence; but her eyes still seemed to hint of doubt, and I floundered on in some confusion. "You know I—I've always been—a—fond of animals."

Luckily Mr. Merton and Jack Dalby, who had been enjoying their cigars at the other end of the garden, sauntered up at that moment, so that our conversation was cut short before I could commit myself further; and shortly afterwards Jack and I said "good night" and took our departure together.

The Mertons had only recently removed from London to Carminster, where they had many friends, Mrs. Merton having been a Carminster girl, and where they had always intended to settle down when Mr. Merton retired from business. Barely six weeks had elapsed since the first detachment of the household had taken possession of their handsome villa, a mile or two from the town; but in that space of time, short as it was, Edith Merton easily succeeded in establishing her sovereignty over the young men of Carminster and its environs. She was very pretty and fascinating, of course; a year or so ago I should have delighted to describe and dwell upon her charms, but, as things have turned out, I have no heart for the work. It will, however, be understood at once that she was more than ordinarily fair when I repeat that all the young men of Carminster admired her, for we of Carminster are notoriously fastidious and our standard is a high one. Even I, with all my experience of woman and the world—I was twenty-one last birthday—had to admit that I had never seen a more charming girl, and was speedily enrolled among her admirers.

We were a numerous body, altogether too numerous to suit my taste, indeed; and I must confess that I could gladly have dispensed with the majority of my comrades, some of whom were really dangerous rivals, men whom any girl might have been glad to marry. Such, for example, were Ayres, who had absolutely the finest moustache in the county; Barham, our liveliest man-about-town, whose taste in neckties and waistcoats is dazzlingly perfect; and Horseley, who is the only man in our set who can drive four-in-hand. These were formidable rivals, and it is not surprising that I sometimes felt my spirits sink when I saw how desperately in earnest they all three were. For although I have been told that I am not altogether devoid of the qualities likely to please a lady—my friends call me "Beau" Maddick, a name which speaks for itself—yet, unlike the men of mark I have alluded to, I possess no specially brilliant accomplishments standing boldly out from all the rest, and thus challenging attention, though I flatter myself that I repay investigation when I have once managed to attract it. How I was to do so in the present instance was a question I was always asking myself, but as yet I had completely failed to find a satisfactory answer.

I was thinking of all this as Jack Dalby and I walked home together that pleasant May evening, and pondering how to distinguish myself from the common herd of Edith's suitors, when suddenly a brilliant and gigantic thought flashed on me like an inspiration, causing me to wave my walking-stick wildly in the air and to ejaculate:

"I've got it!"

"Got what?" asked Jack, who was fumbling in his pockets; "a match, I hope, for I'm out of them and I want to light my pipe."

"Nothing spoils the shape of one's pockets so much as carrying odds and ends about in them," I said severely. "I've told you so a thousand times. No! of course I haven't got a match. It was an idea!"

"No wonder you make such a fuss about it," he answered drily. "I'm sure I congratulate you on your firstborn, and hope he'll prove a healthy child. Still, I think a match would have been more useful—unless, indeed, your idea happens to be a luminous one."

"Indeed it is!" I cried enthusiastically. "Thanks to it, I see my way clearly now."

"Trot out the little wonder, then; let's hear it by all means, Beau," he said, striking the attitude of stage attention. "Proceed, your story interests me."

"I dare say," I retorted scornfully. "No, no, Jack. I may be a beau, but I'm not to be drawn!" and chuckling heartily at my repartee, I bade him "good night," for we had arrived at the head of my street.

Tell him, indeed! Make my invention public before I had secured the profits of it! I was not quite such a fool. Not that I feared Jack Dalby as a rival. I had never thought of him in that connection for a moment, for Jack clothed rather than dressed himself, was certainly not what I call good-looking, always seemed ill at ease and out of place in a drawing-room, and altogether was anything but a ladies' man. It is true that since the arrival of the Mertons he had visited them frequently, but then his family had known them for many years, so that he was quite an old friend; besides, he and Mr. Merton had the same political convictions, and delighted in abusing for hours all those who had not. No! Had Jack been my sole rival my mind would have been at ease; but the fellow is such a talker that I knew I might as well roar my secret out at the Cross on the first market-day, as impart it to him in strict confidence. And my plan was one which publicity would have ruined, for, once pointed out, anybody could practise it, although in justice to myself I must add that it certainly

required brains to think of it. It was Columbus and the egg over again.

But the time when secrecy was necessary is now past, and so I will at once state that my idea was simply to ingratiate myself with the children, to become their friend and playmate, and thus to show how domestic I was in my habits, and how affectionate was my disposition. A man so fond of children, Miss Merton might be expected to argue, must make a good husband, and in any case I should secure two little partisans whose infant voices would ever be hymning my praises in my absence, until in time their baby hands, so to speak, placed hers in mine! At least, that was my theory; let us see how it worked out in practice.

At first nothing could have been better. I summoned to my aid the good fairy Chocolate—a Brownie, with great power over juvenile minds—and, thanks to her potent spells, had soon secured a firm place in Floss's youthful affections; while, within a week of our first meeting, I overheard Dick delaring emphatically that I was "such a jolly beast!" This was praise indeed! But popularity such as that is always bound to bring penalties in its train, and my case was no exception to the rule. Dick, a sturdy, fair-haired imp of eight, and Floss, a pretty little thing, some two years younger, with long golden curls and deep blue eyes, were nice enough children to look at, and would have made a capital coloured "plate" to be given away with a Christmas Number; but they were terrible romps, and any one whom they delighted to honour had to take a prominent part in their amusements, which were all of an unpleasantly vigorous description.

In these diversions they soon allowed me to participate, and as I was unwilling to hazard my newly-won popularity by a refusal, I entered into their games with great seeming spirit and enthusiasm. From that time forward they always hailed my arrival at the villa with shrieks of welcome, and speedily carried me off to the garden to play—at least, it was play to them, but it was very little short of death to me. No amusement had a chance of being adopted by them unless one could get hot and dirty at it; and as I was always expected to distinguish myself especially by my vigour, at the end of our gambols I was always the hottest and dirtiest of the three, so that I often felt almost ashamed of myself when I entered the drawing-room, where I usually found Edith placidly conversing with Jack Dalby, who frequently came to the villa to talk politics with Mr. Merton.

Like most old men who talk politics after dinner, however, Mr. Merton invariably fell asleep in his chair sooner or later, and as Mrs. Merton, like most old ladies whose husbands talk politics after dinner, generally did likewise even more promptly, poor Edith frequently had to entertain that dull dog Jack in the drawing-room while I was entertaining the children in the garden. I felt for her—and for myself. Still, I could see that my stratagem was proving fairly successful. Miss Merton was more friendly with me than she had ever been before, and Messrs. Ayres, Barham, and Horseley had to "take back seats," as the latter remarked disconsolately. So I determined to persevere with my plan till a favourable opportunity presented itself and I became an accepted suitor; after which happy event, I mentally decided, Dick and Floss would have to amuse themselves!

But time went on without bringing me the much-desired opportunity, though no fewer than three most promising ones had been nipped in the bud by the sudden irruption of the children, who had heard of my arrival and hastened to seize their prey. I was fast becoming desperate, for my passion for Edith waxed stronger daily, as did my disgust for hide-and-seek and all its kindred; but my fate was still undecided when one day in the last week of June, I found myself one of a party picnicking in some well-known woods, twelve miles from Carminster. The party was chiefly for children, but there was a fair sprinkling of what they call "grown-ups," among whom were Edith, Jack, and myself; and I had determined to put an end to my suspense and to ask the all-important question that very day, if I could only get a chance.

At first fortune seemed to favour me. After luncheon—a dreadful meal of the usual scrambling description—I observed Miss Merton wandering off into the woods alone, and, quickly following her, overtook her by a rustic seat under a gnarled old oak. Evidently she was surprised to see me, for she changed colour visibly; but she greeted me with some commonplace about the weather, to which I replied with something equally bright and original. In this strain we chatted disjointedly for a few minutes; but all the time I was gathering courage, and framing the words of my proposal, until at last I felt emboldened to make a start.

"Miss Merton," I began, gazing earnestly at her with a look which was meant to express hopeless yearning, though I tried it afterwards in my looking-glass and am bound to confess it resembled nothing so much as helpless intoxication; but this is by the way. "Miss Merton, I am so glad to find you here alone. If you only knew——"

"Mis-ter Haddock! Mister Haddock!"

The voices came from some distance, but I knew those sounds of dreadful import; I recognised the "cry of the children." Haddock, I may state, is their ingenious—but unpleasant—perversion of my name.

"I do believe," said Edith, "that's Dick and Floss!"

"I'm sure of it," I groaned; "but if we keep quiet perhaps they'll pass us by."

"Are you tired of them already?" she asked in tones of reproachful surprise. "Ah! I thought——"

"No, no," I interrupted mendaciously; "but I do think, like Grosvenor in 'Patience,' that they might at least give me the usual half-holiday. They are charming children, charming! but one likes a change occasionally."

"Don't let them hear you say that," she replied, laughing nervously. "They've set you up on quite a pedestal——"

"From which," I broke in, determined not to throw away my chance, "I descend to throw myself at the feet of one who——"

"I found him first!" yelled a little fiend, grabbing me by the leg. "Told you I would, Floss. So there, now!"

"Ye-yeth!" gasped a flying body, precipitating itself at my coat-tails; "but it was me that saw him turn into the wood, Dick, and I told oo. So there!"

"Well, it doesn't much matter anyhow," said Dick. "At all events, we've got him."

Yes! they'd got me! There was no help for it. I could only put as good a face on the matter as possible.

"And now you've got me," I asked, trying to smile, "what do you want me to do for you?"

"Come and be a bear," said Dick. "We want somebody to be a bear."

"Yeth, tum and be a bear," lisped Floss.

"You want me to be a bear," I replied, with a mournful laugh. "Oh, yes! I quite understand. You should see me, Miss Merton," I went on, with an effort to appear quite in my element; "I really make a very dreadful bear!"

"A dreadful boar indeed!" she murmured absently.

"Not boar," I corrected, "but bear—the bear of little folk-lore. 'And a great, big bear came and gobbled him all up,' you know."

"I beg your pardon," she answered in great confusion and with a charming blush. "I really did not know what I was saying. I—I was thinking of something else at the moment."

"Do you care to come with us?" I continued persuasively. "I assure you I'll roar as gently as any sucking-dove."

"Thank you," she replied; "I think I prefer to sit in the shade, and watch you. But here is Mr. Dalby," she added, as Jack lounged up; "no doubt he'll be glad to help you to amuse the children."

"No, no!" I cried hastily, for I wished to keep to myself all the credit that was to be got out of the children. I had fought the battle unaided too long to be willing to share the honours at the close. "We'll get on capitally without him. I know he does not care for this kind of thing. He's not like me," I went on with dismal merriment. "There's nothing I enjoy so much—ha! ha!—as a regular romp. But Jack's too solemn for that, and besides, he has not my—my love for little people. Come along, Dick; come on, Floss!" and I hurried off with my tormentors, though not before Jack, greatly to my surprise, had seized me by the hand and wrung it warmly, whispering in accents of fervent gratitude, "Thanks, old boy! I'll do as much for you some day." Why on earth should Jack thank me? Did he imagine for a moment that I had declined his aid because I wished to save him trouble? How little he knew me!

"Well, Dick," I said, as we joined a group of children who were busily engaged in tying their handkerchiefs into huge, hard knots, "so you want me to be a bear and chase you all, eh?"

"Oh, no!" he replied, "that's a silly game. We want to play basting the bear."

"Yes, yes! basting the bear!" shrieked the juvenile chorus.

Their hearts seemed set upon it, so I consented, though without enthusiasm. It is a delightfully simple game, the chief aim of the players being to hit the bear with their tightly-knotted handkerchiefs as hard and as often as possible, while the unhappy animal rushes madly about, striving to catch one of his nimble assailants. It is a lively and amusing game, but from the bear's point of view—well, it hurts! However,

my young friends—or, rather, fiends—kept me hard at it until I contrived to capture one of them, when they suddenly discovered that they were tired of it, and proposed a change. We played a good many games after that. We played horses, I was the horse; hide-and-seek, I sought; blind man's buff, I was blind man; and Tom Tiddler's ground, I was Tom Tiddler; in short, we went systematically through the whole loathsome list of boys' games with such spirit and energy that I was outwardly perspiring, and inwardly fuming, long before the bell called the children back to the carriages for tea. As for my appearance, it was simply pitiable. My clothes were covered with dust; my collar was a limp rag; my tie was under my ear; and my hat, which had twice been trodden under foot and once sat upon, would have been scorned by a self-respecting tramp. No wonder I looked rather sheepish as I walked up to the rest of the company, or that I kept myself as much as possible in the background during tea. I am afraid I was in a very bad temper, for it is not pleasant to know that you are looking like a guy, especially when, like me, you pride yourself upon your neatness of attire; and my natural irritation was much increased when I spied Dalby seated next Miss Merton, and talking to her a great deal more than I thought at all necessary. Had it been anybody but Jack I should have felt dreadfully jealous; as it was, I thought he might have paid more attention to the plain girls, who get so small a share of the joys of this world. But I fear Jack has not my generosity and kind heart. He has no thought for others.

But even picnics must have an end, and at last we started on our homeward journey, though my temper was not improved when I found myself relegated to a carriage full of clamorous children, on the strength of my supposed fondness for their society, while Jack again succeeded in securing the seat next Edith. And yet I did not dare to remonstrate. I had to walk into Pandemonium, and pretend that I liked it. Assuredly, strategy has its drawbacks.

> Oh, what a tangled web we weave
> When first we practise to deceive!

Nor did my troubles end when we reached the town, for Jack and I dined informally with the Mertons after our return, when Jack's extraordinary behaviour gave me renewed cause for dissatisfaction. Not only did he practically monopolise Miss Merton's society, but he conversed with her chiefly in undertones, thereby giving his communications an unduly confidential appearance. In short, he acted as though he were a favoured lover, monstrous as such a supposition seemed to be; and as that was a piece of presumption I could not tolerate, I resolved to speak to him very seriously on our way home, and to demand a clear declaration of his real object. But somehow, when I found myself walking down the avenue with him an hour or two later, I hardly knew how to frame my expostulations; for, after all, it was a delicate subject, and perhaps he might resent my interference. So I hesitated, for his temper was hasty and his boots were heavy, but he seemed in such a good humour as he marched gaily along, whistling loudly and swinging his stick in the air, that at last I determined to risk it and prepared to open fire. But he anticipated me, stopping short, just as we reached the high-road, and addressing me in the following extraordinary manner:

"Wish me joy, old chap!" he shouted, slapping me hard on the back just where the "basting" had been most successful. "I've done it at last."

"Don't do it again, then," I growled, ruefully rubbing my shoulders. "Why can't you keep your paws to yourself?"

"What a fool I was to hesitate so long!" he continued, ignoring my interruption. "What says the poet? 'He either fears his fate too much, or his deserts are small——'"

"I don't know how much dessert you took," I snarled, dodging his uplifted hand, which was threatening a repetition of the slapping process, "but it's pretty easy to see you took too much wine after it. You must be drunk."

"Ha, ha, Beau, you're on the wrong track," he answered gaily; "this isn't wine, it's joy!"

"I'm glad you told me," I sneered; "but the difference isn't visible to the naked eye. The sooner you're at home the better, I think. People might make a mistake."

"Nonsense, my boy! No more mistakes! That's all over now. I've done it, I tell you. I've funked the jump for ever so long, but to-day I plucked up courage, made a rush, and—I'm over! Yes, I'm over, Beau."

"So I see," I muttered; "half-seas over."

"And to think I owe it all to you!" he cried, clutching my hand and working it

up and down like a pump-handle; "I always did say you were rather a decent sort."

"'Approbation from Sir Hubert,'" I returned sarcastically, freeing my fingers from his grasp. "I am much flattered by the handsome terms in which you have spoken of me, but I must confess I do not know what I have done to deserve such enthusiastic praise."

"Ha, ha!" he roared again, "playing 'humble Allen,' eh? 'Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame,' and all that kind of thing. But it won't do; I must thank you, so you needn't try to evade me. I can tell you I never felt so grateful to any one in my life before. It was so thoughtful of you to take the children away to-day, and give me the very chance I wanted. Ah, it's a great thing to have a true friend. I'll never forget you, my boy. Of course I profited by your kindness. You hadn't got a hundred yards away before I'd proposed to Miss Merton and been accepted."

"Accepted!" I yelled. "You don't mean to tell me Miss Merton accepted—you!"

"I knew you'd be delighted to hear it. Yes, it's true, and we owe our happiness to you. By Jove, though, I don't think I could do for any one what you have done for me. I know quite well you don't really care for children, and yet you made a perfect martyr of yourself, night after night dragging them away with you and leaving us practically alone together. It's not as if you only did it once, you did it always! And all out of friendship, too! Upon my word, it's the kindest thing I ever heard of."

I could not speak; rage choked me. That Edith Merton should actually prefer a man who smoked pipes and wore turn-down collars to me, was bad enough; but that I, poor, blind wretch, should have helped on my rival's suit by assisting him to interviews with the girl I myself was striving to win, that I should have undergone some two months of martyrdom to help Jack Dalby in his wooing, and that, finally, I should have presented him with the last thing needful, a good opportunity for proposing—all this was simply maddening.

On I walked, grinding my teeth in my blind rage and seeing nothing; nor was it until Jack addressed a question to me for the third time that I recovered sufficiently to reply.

"But of course you'll be the best man at the wedding you have laboured so hard to bring about?" he said.

"Best man! Wedding! No!" I howled, "a thousand times no!"

"What's wrong with you, man?" he asked in some surprise. "Why, Beau, you're—ha! ha!—you're unstrung."

"Don't call me Beau!" I snapped fiercely. I was in no mood to bear such barbarities. Unstrung, indeed!

"Mustn't say Bo to a goose, I suppose," he chuckled. "All right, then. But, joking apart," he went on obtusely—'for, of course, you're only joking—you'll act as my best man, won't you? After all you have done for us——"

"I am sorry," I said, trying to speak with some composure, though scarcely knowing what I said, "but I shall not be in Carminster when your wedding takes place. I have urgent private affairs at—at—the North Pole. They demand my immediate attention, and are likely to detain me some time, so I—good night!" and fairly taking to my heels at the conclusion of this lucid statement, I rushed down the street away from him.

I need hardly say that I do not intend to officiate in any capacity at their wedding, which takes place in September. I may state, however, that I have abandoned diplomacy for ever. The copy-books tell us that "Honesty is the best policy," and, from my experience of stratagem, I am inclined to deduce that the copy-books are right.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LI. BY ORDER OF THE KING.

WHY had Penelope come for him?

When she had retired to her room a great happiness filled her heart, a happiness which seemed all the greater because the previous time had been so hopeless, and she had rebelled so much. Now Forster had come back to her, and he was hers, and she might love him without the crushing feeling of some invisible Nemesis always confronting her.

He had wanted to leave her; that was for Philip's sake, and on his side it was natural, but the future belonged to the living, not to the dead, and the future was theirs.

It was a strange joy she felt, a joy which she had never before experienced, and which she could not analyse. Forster and she must have been made for each other; nothing had kept them apart. The union had not been effected altogether as she had once imagined it. The first spontaneous joyousness of young love was gone, for their love had ripened in gloom, but it was perfected now. He was worthy of all that a Winskell could give him, and all that he did was right; even this last holding back from her was in accordance with his character. He had loved Philip deeply, and he was true.

As she sank down in a chair with a smile on her lips, she, too, gazed out of the window and over the glen, and wondered how it was that she had lived through the last weeks of her life. Pride had helped to support her; pride and the strong inherited will of the Winskells.

Then thought lost its hold upon connected words, and her mind seemed to lie sunning itself in a sea of happiness. She had asked for the one love, she had craved for it, and now it was given to her.

Had any woman ever loved before as she did now? Some could be wooed so easily, so lightly, but she was not one of them. Some could be satisfied with a husband who was but a poor travesty of manhood, but she could not.

"Forster! Forster!" she called aloud, trying to realise her joy. "Forster, Forster, I am yours, and—and you belong to me at last, at last!"

She started, for some voice seemed to answer her and to call her by name.

"Penelope!"

She was startled and looked round; then she fancied the sound had come from outside, so going hastily to the window she threw it open.

The moonlight seemed to rush in as if it had been waiting for this opportunity. It shone round her head and fell across her bosom, making her neck and hands white as snow.

"Penelope!"

This time the Princess knew the call and she shivered a little. Below, her father was leaning against the wall, but his face was in shadow and she could not see its expression.

"Penelope! Come down, girl," he called; "come, I want you."

"It is very late, father," she said. "Why do you want me now? If you have found another hoard I do not want to see it. It matters nothing to me."

"Ah, so that's now your tune, girl. The bird sang another song before. You have had nothing to say to me since then. Make haste, I want you, or I must come to you."

Penelope would have scorned herself if this evening of all evenings she had been a coward. Forster's future wife must be subject to no mean fear.

"I will come," she said quickly, "but it is a strange time to disturb any one. It is the merest chance that I am not asleep."

"I saw your light and his light too. Ay, you can do without me now. I am to have no gratitude. You forget that I am still the King of Rothery."

Penelope did not hear all her father's angry mutterings. She threw on her long black cloak, furred within to keep out the cold of the valley, and hastily passed out of her room. It was unlikely that she would sleep to-night, her brain was too active, so she might as well see what her father wanted as stay in her room waiting for the day to come.

She stepped through the hall and passed down the ghost's passage leading to her father's turret. No ghostly steps followed her. Strange that they had ceased; to her the passage seemed more lonesome without them, for she had been accustomed for so long to the mysterious echo.

She slipped out into the moonlight and shivered at the cold. It was some moments before she could see where her father was standing, and when she came up to him she realised how foolish she had been to obey him.

"What do you want with me, father?" she said impatiently.

"Come to the farm, don't stay here; I have a fire burning out there, it's always burning."

"Why should I come? It is very late, and I ought to be in bed."

"He is awake too," said the old man, jerking his head towards Forster's room window.

Penelope did not answer, but the King turned into the courtyard, and, creeping along the wall, he led his daughter into the glen, and from thence he hobbled down the hill leading to the farm in the wood.

Penelope did not seem to heed the way; her mind was full of Forster, and all else seemed to matter very little. At last they reached the wood and took the path to the farm. The King lifted the latch and walked in. As he had said, a very large fire was burning brightly on the hearth. In one corner a heap of wood was piled up.

The old man sat down and warmed his hands at the flame, whilst Penelope stood close to him, waiting till he should speak.

When he had warmed himself he rose and went to an iron chest full of the recovered treasure, from which he took a bag of coin and placed it on the table.

"There," he said, "there, look at that, girl."

"What do I care?" she said scornfully. "You can keep your gold now. If you had——"

"Ho! that's it, is it? Well, so you have enough money now, eh?"

"Yes, I have enough."

"And whose gold is it, pray?"

"My own—legally mine."

"Eh! legally yours; then keep it and marry your lover!"

Then came the evil, mad look into his face, and Penelope recoiled from her own intended deed when she heard it thus spoken of by her father. Then, ashamed of her cowardice, she added:

"That is what I shall do."

"You are mighty independent, girl. You don't think of thanking me for having given you your wish."

"You! You never gave me anything except my existence, and what did you care what became of it?"

She walked up and down between the hearth and the window with the old rebellious feeling in her heart. Had not her life been ruined by her own father, and only now, when she had taken the law into her own hands, was she able to shape her own happiness.

The old King, crouching over the fire, chuckled.

"You and Greybarrow never took me into account, and after all I've done everything. I've saved the house, and given you a husband worthy of the family honour. You and Greybarrow chose a poor sort of a husband, a tradesman, nothing more, a man whose father was——"

"Hush!" said Penelope, stopping short in front of her father, and looking grand in the mean room where only the firelight spoke of comfort. "Hush! Philip Gillbanks was a better man than any that our family has produced."

"You speak like that now, but you sang to another tune before."

"Why should I justify myself to you?" she said, her sense of past injustice making her suddenly revolt against her father's tyranny. "Why have you brought me here?"

"Your devilish pride is all very well, but go along with you, go and do as I tell you, not as Greybarrow plans. You owe it to me, to me; I put him out of your way. Eh! Penelope, it's not many that would dare to be master when I am alive. I'm the master here, and he, he found it out."

The old man looked round furtively and lowered his voice, whilst, as if a thunderbolt had fallen at her feet, a sudden horror and astonishment took possession of his daughter.

"What are you talking about? What do you mean?" she said, coming a few steps nearer, so that the sullen flames fell on her hands and dress, dyeing them, as it seemed, a blood-red colour.

There was a pause, and the silence was broken by a cry of the chained fox, and the weird answer of his prowling brethren far away in the woods.

"What I say. What happened to the interloper, eh, girl?"

"He was lost in the fog, and he must have fallen into the Rothery. It may be that the torrent will never give up its—its dead."

Penelope repeated this as if it were a lesson she had learnt by heart.

The King laughed a wild, mad laugh.

"And who, then, could lead a stranger to his destruction better than myself, the King here, the man who has saved the estate and who has chosen your husband? He was not your husband, fool. Do you think you could marry without my consent? You and Greybarrow were mistaken. Get along with you and marry your lover. I—I—— Stoop, girl, and listen; I put Philip away, never fear. I'm old and feeble since my boy died, but I could do that, and no tongues can blab here. There, get along with you, and thank your father for it."

But Penelope never moved. In her wildest moments the idea that Philip had been murdered, and that by the hand of her father, had never occurred to her. The very idea now paralysed her brain and even her limbs. She did not move, nor for some moments did she speak, but she stared at the old man before her and noted how his sudden energy and passion had died down, so that now he hardly seemed to notice her, except as something in his way, for he kept muttering his previous words mingled with oaths.

"Get along with you, go to your lover."

Suddenly she woke up to some kind

of realisation of the meaning of his revelation.

"I won't go, I won't go till you tell me. Did you—did you"—she could not say murder—"did you lure Philip to his death?"

"Ah! there you are. You didn't think I would do it. You wanted him to go, but I did it, I did it—for you, Penelope, mind, it was for you."

"For me! for me!" she said scornfully. "You did it out of your own evil mind. You are mad, you must be. What have you done? You have ruined my life once more. You have made me guilty, me—a murderer's daughter. How shall I face him again, how shall I?"

She felt that she could no longer bear the presence of this man, this embodiment of the evil which had surrounded her whole life. Filled with inexpressible horror she hurried to the door and rushed out, she knew not where.

"Philip was dead;" that fact had not deeply affected her, but that Philip had been murdered, and murdered by her own father, crushed her. Now it seemed to her that she was guilty, through him, guilty of —of murder!

The words fastened themselves on her as if some hideous monster had sprung on her and was gripping her by the throat. This was the answer to the mystery of Philip's disappearance, and how easy this thing had been! There was no difficulty in it. In that dense fog one push was enough, if the spot were well chosen, to send a living being to a nameless and undiscoverable grave in the deep caverns of the Rothery.

On she went. She had taken the path through the wood, regardless of the thorns and branches that caught in her hair, and at every step tore her cloak. If only they could tear that monster from off her, if only they could make him release her throat, out of which only the word "murder" could come forth!

What was she to do? Philip had been murdered by her own father. Then it was not Heaven that had interposed in her favour, it was not that her path had been made clear and that love had been given to her in answer to her call for it; but the truth was that Philip had been put away, murdered by her own father, who had now owned his guilt.

What was she to do? To her clear, reasoning mind, already humbled by suffering, the truth was revealed as if all the world had heard her father's announcement. To marry Forster when her father had murdered his friend was an impossible thing. What would he say if he knew it? But must he be told?

"Have I ever deceived him?" she thought.

Deceit was no part of her nature. To deceive Philip, according to her ideas of deceit, had been impossible to her; to deceive Forster, the man she loved, the man who had conquered her pride, was far, far more impossible.

She must tell him, but how? The horror of the deed seemed swallowed up in the horror of having to tell him. If she paused she knew that her courage would fail; she must go and do it at once.

She began to look about her and found that she was close to the spot where the gold had been discovered. It was that which had brought all her sorrow upon her, the hateful gold. Gradually her power of connected thought returned, and, painfully retracing her steps, she followed the path leading from the wood.

Everything about her seemed to say, "Philip is murdered." The very trees appeared to stretch out their arms to her and whisper the same horrible message, "Philip is murdered." His face rose before her mind's eye with a look of reproach on the fair, kindly features. Now he was dead, the fact had not touched her till she realised that he had been murdered by the King, her father, and that the place which his gold had saved from being sold publicly was to be his grave.

She fled out of the wood horror-struck. Philip seemed to be close to her, behind her, in front of her. Her excited brain conjured up all the horror he might have suffered when he found himself falling down into the treacherous water, with no hand held out to save him, and no voice to warn him.

Penelope felt that she had done the deed. Her pride revolted against this thought, but it forced itself upon her again and again. When she reached the Palace she went round to the courtyard, and saw that there was still a light burning in Forster's room. He was, then, not gone to bed, he was waking still. She was losing all power of feeling now, only the words rang in her ears, "Philip is dead, he is murdered," and everything about her seemed to echo them, "Philip is murdered."

When she reached Forster's door she paused, for she could not yet make up her mind to knock. For a little while longer

he must think her, the woman who was going to be his bride, innocent, but—— then she paced the passage, slowly and always to the same tune of death, wondering how to end the hesitation of her whole nature.

"Would he believe her, would he——?"

Suddenly, before she could realise how long she had been in the passage, she heard the sound of his footsteps, and Forster opened the door.

CHAPTER LII. PARTED.

PENELOPE never paused till she reached the garden gate leading into the glen. The night was perfectly still; the wind had sunk with a tired sigh, and the cold moonlight reigned supreme.

Forster followed her as if in a dream. He could not imagine what she could want, or what it all meant, but he remained calm, feeling that he could no longer fight against his fate. Events were too powerful for him. He was like a wild animal, who, caught in a trap, has struggled till he can struggle no longer, and now merely looks apathetically at his prison bars.

Now, when the woman who had called forth the first great passion of his life stood before him, he was recalled to some sort of reasoning power. How pale she was! Dark rings were round her eyes, and her cloak was torn. He could not help believing that some powerful reason had made the Princess seek him out.

"Why have you brought me here?" he said, as she leant against the gate without uttering a word, even without looking at him.

Still she did not answer, and Forster's heart was touched. He came one step nearer to her and took her cold, listless hands in his.

"Dearest, you said it last night. It seems long, long ago, but it was true. We are bound to each other. Tell me what is distressing you. How can I comfort you?"

A sob was heard, a low sob coming from the depth of a strong, untamed nature.

"Oh, Forster, kiss me once, only once; it isn't wrong."

He did not understand her; he only knew that he was hedged in by circumstance, and that there seemed to be no way out of it. He could turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. Now, with the despair that he knew would always be his, he put his arm round her and lifted her pale face towards his with a gentle hand. He could not kiss her lips, the lips that had been false to Philip, but he kissed her cold white forehead; he knew it now—they were bound to each other.

Again there was a silence, as those two stood there, close to each other, but with that terrible story parting them.

To Penelope it was the first perfect moment of her life, her first glimpse of heaven. She knew that it was the last kiss she must have, but for this once, oh! before he knew the miserable truth she must feel, she must know all that she was resigning. The bitterness of death was nothing, she thought, when compared with this, for if the renunciation of that which she had hardly realised was so terrible, how wonderful must the reality be.

But she had loved, she loved. She knew the meaning of it now, and the whole fabric of her former pride of birth was swept away. Had Forster been of low origin it would have mattered nothing to her, he would have taken possession of her soul and of her whole being. These few seconds were like a thousand years. Time and place were not, she knew now the mystery of the world and the mystery of love.

She tried to live her life in these few seconds, and she tried also to kill her love for him. She must; she loved him so much that she must kill what was dearest to her, because—because—of——!

The horror came back, and of her own free will she suddenly started back and hid her face in her hands. As she stepped back the moonlight was mercifully intercepted by the shadow of a tree.

"Forster, Forster!" she said in a low voice of agony, "you must go away; you must never come back here again, never!"

"What do you mean?" he said, still weak and powerless to fathom what was taking place.

"There is a curse on this house, and on me!"

All his chivalry asserted itself. He could not help being noble, and at once he was by her side again, but she would not let him touch her.

"No, no; hush! I must tell you, and you must swear to be silent. Only go, go before another day has passed, and forget us all, forget me. I must live my life here, and alone."

"Penelope, dearest, what are you saying? What has changed you? Last night——"

"Last night I did not know; now I have seen my father."

"Why notice the words of a crazy old man? What has he said, what has he a right to say?"

There was a wooden seat close by, and Penelope sank down on it; she could not stand; strong as she was, her strength now seemed to forsake her.

"He is my father—and—Forster, have pity, have pity."

He knelt down beside her and tried to draw her hands away from her face, but she shook her head.

"Don't touch me. I am—I am—how shall I tell you, Forster? I am a murderer's daughter!"

"A murderer's daughter? Are we all going mad here?"

"No, no, not mad, but I think we are God-forsaken, and you—you who are so good, so noble—Forster, don't question, only believe me. As if I would say this, as if I would ruin my own life if I did not know it. It was my father who murdered Philip. He lured him into the Rothery."

"He murdered Philip!" said Forster, starting to his feet, "and why, why? No, it is impossible. It is too horrible—monstrous!"

"He murdered Philip—that I might marry you."

Penelope spoke very slowly, she seemed to have lost the power of feeling any more now, but she was tasting a draught from the cup of despair.

"Is it true—is it true?"

"It is true."

There was a long, long pause, or so it seemed to them both. An owl flew slowly overhead, and his "hoot, hoot," added new terror to the moment. There was a flutter in the trees close at hand as if some bird had fallen from his perch, and from across the wood came the yelps of the captive fox.

"Good Heaven! Penelope," Forster burst out at last, "say it is not true. You are trying me; say you are." Then looking at her, and seeing the unearthly paleness of her face and the look of horror in her eyes, he stopped short. "What shall we do?" he added.

"Forster, if you love me, if you have loved me, go away and—say nothing, do nothing. The dead are not without their avengers, and Philip is already avenged."

"Leave you? Penelope, how can I?"

"How can we do anything else?"

"He is a crazy old man, he—he did not know——"

For one moment Penelope was filled with a new hope. She started up and came one step nearer to him, but then an awful thing happened to her. She saw Forster step back—one step, only one, and then he stood still—but she knew, and felt that she had always known, that that was impossible. Forster could not, could not be allied to Philip's murderer.

Penelope was proud and she was courageous. At that moment, unnoticed by human eyes, she was heroic. She did not show by one word, by one movement, by one look, that her heart was pierced; she hardly acknowledged it to herself, for had she not fully determined beforehand that this could not be?—but the certainty that the decision, if it were hers alone in spoken words, was also that of Forster's inmost soul, crushed her. His murdered friend stood between them, and must stand between them always, to all eternity.

"He is not too crazy to know. Forster, you must go. We must never, never meet again. I have loved once. I, who thought myself some one—a Princess—I have loved once, and now I am, I am—I must live under the shadow of this crime always, always."

She paused, and clenched her hands till her nails pierced her palms. She was still a Princess, and she was still brave.

"Good-bye, Forster. Go, go early to-morrow before I can see you again—and oh! don't come near me now, don't touch me, but in your heart—you who are so good—in your heart pity me and forgive me."

Forster was human, and this was the only woman he had ever loved. He made a step towards her. Only a short time since her head had rested against him, his lips had kissed her, and now, once, if once only, he must feel her against him, he must.

"Penelope," he held out his arms, but she was gone; she had fled up the glen—the glen where Philip had been murdered—and he did not follow her.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 293.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER II.

THE little cathedral city of Alnchester; lying snugly ensconced beneath its long range of sheltering, if insignificant hills; seemed to have missed, in spite of its antiquity, that vaguely attractive quality called venerableness. The few old houses left had little character of their own, and no beauty. Even the cathedral was an uninteresting grey pile. The market-place and all the older part of the town lay directly at the bottom of the hills and near the river. The newer parts had grown up on the other side of the market-place, and had spread up a steep rise in the ground; and it was from these newer parts that the town derived such negative colour as it possessed. To the commonplace was wedded an air of unimpeachable respectability; neat, well kept, monotonous.

Whether the character of their city influenced the tone of the inhabitants, or whether the tone of the inhabitants was responsible for the character of the city, it is not possible to say. The fact remains that the people of Alnchester were in perfect harmony with their surroundings.

The ideas of Alnchester were bounded by Alnchester thought. Messages from the world beyond, in the shape of books or newspapers, were received on approval, so to speak; but unless the matter they contained was susceptible of transmutation by the Alnchester mind into something that the Alnchester public could understand and accept, they were loftily ignored, or still more loftily condemned. The wheels of daily life ran in grooves which time had modified, inevitably, to some extent, but which had been modified as inevitably to the Alnchester pattern. Innovations of all kinds were regarded with a disapproving superiority, which only melted into approval and admiration when the progress of time and the touch of necessity had made them apparently indigenous to Alnchester soil.

The society of Alnchester was divided sharply into two divisions: the cathedral people and the townspeople. The two parties never mixed—the thing would have seemed to them inconceivable—but they existed side by side in perfect amity. The cathedral people, the aristocrats of Alnchester, looked down with serene tolerance upon their inferiors. The townspeople were not without a certain pride in the precincts, and were never weary of striving for the impossible—a footing in the "cathedral set." Each sphere had its own interests complete within itself; its own topics of gossip. But either sphere being somewhat limited as a field for human energies, and Alnchester affairs being of course better worth attention than any other, it did happen now and again that a conspicuous event in one sphere would attract the notice of the other, and serve as food for discussion in both.

Such an event had taken place, towards the end of the 'sixties, in the establishment in Alnchester of a new doctor. The circumstance had not at first sight seemed one likely to focus the attention of town and precincts for any length of time. The practice which death had rendered vacant was not an important one. But the transitory interest which was all that his fellow-townsmen had been prepared to bestow

upon the new-comer had found itself, almost without consciousness, certainly without volition, on their part, arrested and held. The new doctor turned out to be a newly-married man. Before very long it began to be whispered about that young Mrs. Vallotson was "rather an acquisition; so capable, and so sensible." And at the same time Dr. Vallotson, who was understood to be ten years her senior, and who was referred to at first in somewhat non-committal terms as "a nice, quiet little man," was discovered to be very clever in his profession. The practice began to grow.

There was a certain feature about the Vallotson household which afforded unlimited material for discussion in Alnchester; and thus helped, other circumstances being so favourable, to keep it before the public eye. And this was the presence therein of a dark, taciturn little boy of four years old. He was introduced to Alnchester as Mrs. Vallotson's half-brother, by name North Branston.

So great a disparity of age between a half-brother and sister, argued a family history of some interest; it also suggested the pleasing probability of exceedingly charming relations of a semi-maternal character between the said brother and sister. As to the first of these two points Alnchester was enlightened on its introduction to the boy in a few matter-of-fact sentences, which accounted for his existence in the simplest fashion, and deprived it of any possible halo of romance. On the second point, also, Alnchester was doomed to a partial disappointment. As far as his material well-being was concerned, no son of the house could have been better cared for than was little North Branston. But every one who saw the woman and the child together was struck, not only by the total absence of any picturesque sentiment in their relations to one another, but by the presence of something which Alnchester found hard to define. No sign of mutual tenderness or sympathy evinced itself, even to the most lynx-eyed observer. The woman was always cold and hard; the child was always silent and reserved. A chill and inexplicable barrier seemed to separate these two who were so closely and peculiarly bound together. The fact, but for the scrupulous care which the child received, would have weighed rather heavily against Mrs. Vallotson in the balance of public favour. In consideration, however, of this care, so unremitting and so untender, sundry sentimental ladies decided that there must be "something" in connection with the death of his parents that had alienated Mrs. Vallotson's affection, and a few judicious questions were put to her husband on the subject. Dr. Vallotson was perfectly willing to answer any questions at any length, provided that he was physically at ease during the process. He was more than willing to detail the circumstances under which he had met his wife, a daily governess in London, making a home for the child by her exertions. But his further information, when sifted, amounted to nothing more or less than the bare statements which had been made in the first instance by his wife.

In the meantime, however, the practice continued to grow, and Dr. and Mrs. Vallotson's popularity and usefulness grew likewise. North Branston, on the other hand, grew upon no one. He was sullen, people said; or stupid; or ill-tempered. Alnchester gradually ceased to find anything singular in Mrs. Vallotson's want of affection for him; began to pity her in that fate had burdened her with the care of him; and to admire the precision with which she did her duty by him.

At six years old the boy was sent to a boarding school. Mrs. Vallotson was the object of much interest to the female section of society at the time, and though only two years had passed since the household was first established at Alnchester, there was no one found to say or think that he was but a little fellow to leave home. It was well known by this time that he was absolutely dependent upon Dr. Vallotson's bounty; and the popular sentiment was one of admiration at the thoroughly first-class, and consequently expensive, nature of the school selected. It was so good of Dr. Vallotson, everybody said; and when a few months later a little girl was added to the Vallotson household, everybody amplified this appreciative dictum. It was particularly good of him now that he had a family of his own, Alnchester said.

From that time onward, for over twenty years, that note of admiration for the way in which "young Branston" was treated remained a fundamental note in the chord of popular opinion as to the Vallotsons. It was understood that the boy was to be educated for the medical profession; he was put steadily through all the most approved stages of such a course. And during the years they occupied, Alnchester knew him only in his vacations. Under these circumstances he soon ceased to be an object of any personal interest. Constance Vallotson,

who remained Dr. and Mrs. Vallotson's only child, belonged by birth to Alnchester; she grew up to that place which her parents had gradually acquired in the town; and was the familiar object of the interest and regard of her fellow citizens. North Branston, on his occasional appearances, was considered solely as a member of the Vallotson household. In this capacity he was criticised, commented upon, and found distinctly wanting. It was an accepted fact that he remained an inharmonious element. And in the lively sense of the difficult temper which was thence imputed to him, the fact, rather vaguely realised in Alnchester, that he was passing through his school and college career with distinction, was relegated to the remotest background.

There was one feature of the attitude of Alnchester, where North Branston was concerned, which was very significant of the attitude of Alnchester to the Vallotsons in every relation of life. It came about as time passed that when the subject was discussed, the wife's name supplanted the husband's. People began to talk of Mrs. Vallotson's goodness and generosity rather than the doctor's. And it was Mrs. Vallotson's name which was more often in the public mouth in every connection. As the years rolled on and the vigorous young wife who had come to the town developed into a vigorous middle-aged woman, there were those who alluded to Mrs. Vallotson as "managing" or "masterful," and even hinted that her husband had neither opinions nor will of his own. But before such sentiments formulated themselves, the Vallotsons' position had become unassailable. By the time North Branston's medical course was finished, Dr. Vallotson was one of the two leading doctors in Alnchester. When North Branston, having taken his degree, returned to the town to become Dr. Vallotson's partner, Alnchester sagely wagged its head and hoped that he properly appreciated his good fortune; hoped, further, that he might improve upon acquaintance, and justify his acceptance for the sake of his connections.

Since then four years had passed. Four years during which the only event in the Vallotson household patent to the Alnchester eye had been Constance Vallotson's three years' sojourn at Girton—an event which was considered rather electrifying alike in town and precincts—and her subsequent departure for a four months' stay with some friends who were travelling at their leisure on the Continent. It was on the termination of these travels at Berlin that North Branston had been commissioned to bring her home; and it was the journey thence which had ended in Alnchester on that misty October afternoon.

CHAPTER III.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening three days after North Branston and Constance Vallotson had reached home, and the Vallotsons' home was very quiet. There was a little room at the back on the ground floor, which was known to the servants as "Dr. Branston's room." It was not a cheerful-looking room at any time; its bare appointments suggested an absence of interest in its owner in anything but the actual necessities of his life; and in the gloomy half-light cast by the concentrated rays of the green-shaded reading-lamp on the writing-table it was particularly cheerless. Seated at the writing-table, writing intently in a well-worn case book, was North Branston.

Long ago, when the tide of public favour first set against him in Alnchester, it had been one of the indictments against North Branston that he was "such a very ugly little boy"; and it was generally held that he had fulfilled the promise of his boyhood by becoming a "most unattractive-looking man." Except in a general darkness of colouring, he bore no resemblance to Mrs. Vallotson. His features were irregular, the outline of his chin and jaw being very finely cut, if somewhat square, while his nose was distinctly too broad. His eyes—very deeply set—were grey; cynical, sarcastic eyes, they were, with a keen glance. He had a good square forehead, too much and too deeply lined for his years. He wore a short moustache, dark, like his hair, which did not hide the fact that his mouth was large, delicately cut, and very firm; or that its resolution was of a contemptuous order. The whole face was full of power, but it was power at its hardest and most unlovely, quite untouched by human sympathy.

And yet, as he sat there, his forehead propped on his clenched hand, forcing himself, as every tense line of his figure showed, to omit no iota of the work in hand, there was that about him which gave a strange and inconsistent touch of pathos to his solitary figure. He was evidently desperately tired. His eyes were sunken even beyond their wont, and there were dark shadows about them. For the last

three days a press of work—which did not extend to Dr. Vallotson, and which that gentleman characterised testily as "quite extraordinary"—had deprived Dr. Branston of proper food and proper rest. He had only come in half an hour ago to take a hasty and solitary meal, and he had set to work immediately to enter his notes for the day.

He worked steadily for twenty minutes, blotted the page, and placed the book in a drawer. Then he seemed to let all his strained muscles relax. He leaned back in his chair, one hand resting nerveless on the blotting pad before him, and gazed straight into space with eyes which spoke of nothing but the consciousness of exhaustion.

A quarter of an hour passed, and still he did not move. But as though he were too strong a man, in body as well as in mind, to be long dominated by fatigue, his expression gradually changed. Thought gradually came back to it; incisive, keenly personal thought. Determination came back to it, cold and clear-cut. At last he rose with the braced and intent expression of a man who feels that work has only been cleared out of the way to have the field clear for yet other and pre-eminently important work. He crossed the room to the door and went down the passage to the drawing-room. The drawing-room door was shut. He opened it and went in.

Mrs. Vallotson was sitting there alone. In the afternoon Dr. Vallotson had given forth his intention of helping North through his press of work by driving into the country—it was a lovely autumn day—to visit a patient who suffered from old age, and who had to be seen occasionally. The relations of the said patient were old friends of the Vallotsons, rich people, with a large country house; and Dr. Vallotson's professional calls always, and as an understood thing, extended into a friendly visit. On this occasion he had taken Constance with him, and the father and daughter were not to be expected back for another half-hour, at least. Of these facts North was of course aware.

Mrs. Vallotson looked up sharply as the door opened, and her brows contracted.

"Have you had supper?" she said tersely.

He bent his head with a slight affirmative gesture, shut the door deliberately behind him, and came across the room to the fireplace. He did not sit down. He leaned one elbow on the mantelpiece and faced Mrs. Vallotson.

"Adelaide," he said, "I want to speak to you."

His voice was rather deep, and a cold reserved tone was habitual to it. But it seemed to be even unusually distinct and full of purpose now, and there was a harder ring about it than was customary.

Mrs. Vallotson, who had turned her attention to her knitting, still with that contraction of her brows, looked up again suddenly. She looked at him for a moment, the shadowy antagonism which had dawned in her face as he entered the room growing swiftly. Then she said harshly:

"Well? What is it?"

North Branston was not looking at her, though he faced her. With the instant that brought him into her presence all the most disagreeable characteristics of his face had accentuated in a very marked degree, and the eyes which he fixed on the basket at her hand were less prepossessing than ever.

"I don't want to put the thing more unpleasantly than is necessary," he said in the same incisive tones. "You'll recollect, no doubt, without my going into details, that when I came here to enter into partnership with Dr. Vallotson I did so against my own convictions."

A curious flash passed across Mrs. Vallotson's face; a flash which was at once a realisation of a suddenly and totally unlooked-for call to battle, and an instantaneous acceptance of the call. Her thin lips took an ugly line.

"You can use any fine words you like about it, of course!" she said. "I remember that you came against your own wishes."

The gesture with which he answered was one of sardonically indifferent acquiescence.

"Very well," he said, "as you like! I was a young fellow then, and I was fool enough to have ambition. I was fool enough, too, I dare say, to believe the men who said I might do something if I stopped in London. One grows out of that kind of thing, however, and I've got through the process. But, putting my private fancies out of the question, perhaps you remember that I said that the thing would never work? That is four years ago. It has had a fair trial, and the time has come to acknowledge all round that it has not worked."

"Who says so?"

Mrs. Vallotson had laid down her knitting and was sitting very erect, her face a little lifted.

"I say so! All Alnchester would say so!"—this with a contemptuous inflection. "Dr. Vallotson would say so if he chose to take the trouble! You would say so, Adelaide, if you chose to speak the truth."

With a sudden violent gesture Mrs. Vallotson broke into an angry exclamation, but North interposed. He did not raise his voice; his gesture was the slightest possible movement; but it was a curious fact that the wrathful, determined woman obeyed it and let him continue.

"I don't want to go into details," he said. "We shall get at nothing by a quarrel. What I have to say is this. I have been offered an appointment in London—a very decent appointment, though that is beside the mark—and I propose to accept it."

"You will not accept it."

"Why not?"

Short, fierce, ringing with determination on either side, the two speeches had followed instantly one upon the other. North had turned his eyes at last, and the man and woman were looking full into one another's faces; each so strong, each as sharply contrasted in the nature of their strength as they were sharply opposed in their set resolution. There was a moment's silence, and then Mrs. Vallotson spoke. It was a significant and noticeable fact that as her passion flamed suddenly into play, that suggestion of something coarse-grained in her nature, which was hardly perceptible about her, usually, except by inference, stepped out of ambush, as it were, and revealed itself in every line of her face. She spoke slowly, but her emphatic voice had lost all refinement of modulation.

"Why not?" she said. "If you're not ashamed to hear, I'll tell you. Because you are under obligations which you can't throw off so easily! Because you were educated for nearly twenty years at Dr. Vallotson's expense; you were dependent upon him for everything. And such return as lies in your power you are bound to make him."

A dull, red flush had mounted to North's forehead, and the muscles round his mouth stood out with unnatural distinctness. But his eyes never wavered. He bent his head.

"Quite true," he said, and his low voice grated slightly. "I am not likely to forget. But what return do I make him by remaining here? The money part of the business has been balanced between us, I should say, in the course of the last four years. You don't allude to that, I suppose? And you can hardly assert that my personal presence is any satisfaction to Dr. Vallotson. Let him take a partner in the regular way, a good, commonplace all-round man—the practice can well afford it—and he will be far better pleased than he is at present."

There was the suggestion of a sneer in his voice, but the doctor's wife took no heed of it.

"I don't know that your personal presence is ever likely to be much satisfaction to any one," she said bitingly. "You don't go the way to make it so, at any rate. But that is not the point. Dr. Vallotson is not so young as he was. You are looked to to help him, and no stranger could take your place. It is your duty to stay."

"I don't agree with you," was the grim response. "And I am going to take the liberty of acting on my own lights on the subject. The present state of things is not such a pleasant one, as it seems to me, that you need be annoyed at its breaking up!"

Mrs. Vallotson laid her hand heavily on the table.

"Once and for all, North," she said, "it shall not be! You have been brought up to fill your present position. That you fill it ill is your fault. Fill it you shall."

Quite suddenly the cold reserve in which North Branston seemed to have encased himself gave way; his very lips lost their colour; his eyes flashed. He took up her words in a voice which thrilled and broke with something desperate and appealing.

"Why?" he cried. "For heaven's sake, Adelaide, why? What am I in this house but a nuisance, an outsider? What have I been to you for as long as I can remember but a thorn in the flesh? To Dr. Vallotson my presence is a continual rub; everything I do, and say, and am, chafes and annoys him; he has disliked me, and resented my existence—no blame to him for it—ever since I was a child. And for yourself, Adelaide—look at the truth if it's only for a moment! Heaven knows I don't forget what I owe to you! It's to you I owe everything—not to Vallotson—I know that. You and I stood alone in the world together when I was a little chap, and you kept the life in me—I don't forget. But when has there been any love between us? Heaven knows why it should be so, but we are opposed to one another in every fibre. Why do you keep us together?"

With every vehement word—as though the feeling which was finding vent at last

gathered strength with each instant of long delayed expression—his excitement had grown; and he stood now confronting her, his eyes glowing, his white face working. But if the strong emotion on his face was strange to it, the face of the woman who listened to him had changed no less.

As though his words, sweeping away all that was superficial about the question at issue, and striking to the root of the matter, had swept away also all that was superficial and temporary about her anger and resolution, all the fierce and alert determination of her face was gone. She had risen to her feet slowly. Her eyes revealed depths only in that moment suggested; and from those depths welled up hard and unmistakeable that which Alnchester had faintly felt between the pair when the man who met it now had been a little child; that which, as it stood forth unveiled and terrible, revealed itself as lurking always behind the cold antagonism of their mature relation; repulsion; repulsion ineradicable, an instinct of the woman's very nature; repulsion only the more terrible for the slow, still horror with which it was mingled. Gradually the passion of appeal which glowed in North's eyes faded, to be as gradually replaced by a ghastly reflection of the look in the woman's eyes which met them. Then with a groan he let his face fall on his arm as he rested it upon the mantelpiece.

Mrs. Vallotson did not move. Gradually the lines into which her face was set began to relax. Something of the woman of every day began to reassert itself upon her features. Her eyes seemed to become more alive. At last she spoke. Her voice was rather thin and strained, but its inflections were those habitual to her.

"You are a fool, North!" she said harshly. "It's of no use to talk heroics. If you think a moment you'll see that my reason for wishing you to stay is perfectly plain and simple, and has nothing to do with sentiment of any kind. That's not my way. Dr. Vallotson and a stranger would never get on together—you know that as well as I do. If he had a partner who was good for anything the practice would drift into the partner's hands before a year was out. If he was not good for anything it would drift somewhere else. That's all. You don't want me to amplify, I suppose?"

There was a pause. Mrs. Vallotson stood erect, one hand resting heavily on the table, her eyes fixed upon the motionless figure before her. At last North Branston moved. He lifted his head slowly, and stood, gripping the edge of the mantelpiece, gazing down to the fire. As though his movement had been some kind of answer to her words, Mrs. Vallotson continued, speaking in a voice that was stronger and more assured.

"You must do as you choose, of course. I can't keep you here by force. If you go it's for your own advantage, I suppose, and it's no use for you to make speeches about not caring and having no ambition. You don't deceive even yourself, I imagine! You can do it, as I say, but understand that you are wanted here, and if you go away you turn your back upon the people who have done everything for you; you turn your back upon your obligations. You can do it, if you care to, but don't say you're doing anything different!"

She stopped; the determined face was turned upon him, lynx-eyed; and North moved again and lifted his eyes, not turning to her, but looking straight before him. The singular and unusual excitement by which he had been so suddenly caught and shaken had died out of his face; the reaction which had followed had evidently penetrated him through and through. His features, on which the traces of physical exhaustion were once more distinctly visible, were set into a cynicism and a depth of self-contempt which was almost apathetic.

"I don't care to!" he said. His voice was low, toneless, and almost expressionless. "I don't care one way or the other! Why should I? As you like, Adelaide!"

FAMOUS JEWELS.

The favour in which we moderns hold our diamonds above all other precious stones is perhaps hardly creditable to our taste. There is something cold and barbaric about the glitter of diamonds, their beauty is independent of any artistic work in their setting, and the distinction they confer upon the wearer is simply an affair of £ s. d. The Greeks, who loved jewels rather for the artistic work about them than for their brute value, if they were acquainted with the diamond, held it in no account, and Roman dames who squandered fortunes over pearls would have turned up their noses, if Roman noses could be turned up, at the notion of wearing diamond earrings. And yet where is the sparkling diamond better placed than

in the ear of a pretty woman: for there it sparkles with a piquancy that varies with every movement, recalling Pope's Belinda and her attendant sylphs:

A thousand wings by turns blew back her hair,
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear.

Though the Phœnicians from their early commerce with India must have been well acquainted with the diamond, they probably found no market for it in Europe, nor is it classed with the rich equipments of the period:

Sidonian mantles rich with purple fold,
Belts bossed with pearls, robes stiff with gems and gold,
And breastplates shining green with emeralds bright,
And helmets rich with precious sapphires dight.

Yet the Jews must have been acquainted with the diamond, for it appears in the breastplate of judgement in Exodus as one of the twelve jewels of mystic significance, that is if the Hebrew word be rightly translated. But it is also significant that it does not appear among the twelve precious stones that form the foundations of the New Jerusalem in Revelations.

The first diamond necklace that appears in history is one given by Charles the Eighth of France to Agnes Sorel; who it is said bitterly complained of the weight and sharpness of the ornament, rather an instrument of torture than a jewel. Charles replied by a phrase which if not then proverbial has become so since: "Il faut souffrir pour être belle."

With the opening of the route to India by the Cape, diamonds came into fashion. There was no thought then that an inexhaustible supply would be found at the half-way house. The Tudors loved diamonds as well as jewels of all kinds; and Henry the Eighth, as he vied with the splendour of Francis, the French King, on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, wore a pourpoint covered with diamonds and rubies, a collar of fourteen rubies, the least as big as an egg, and a carbuncle the size of a goose's egg. Ann Boleyn was there and danced one night, masked, with King Francis, also masked. The gallant King next morning sent his fair partner a beautiful diamond in the shape of a tear, and worth fifteen thousand crowns. Henry looted that, no doubt, when he cut off poor Ann's head. Francis behaved more shabbily to his future daughter-in-law, Catherine de' Medici, for the diamond he sent her soon after was only worth some five hundred crowns. But Catherine was ill-favoured, and she was only a merchant's daughter after all—as her daughter-in-law, the beautiful Mary Stuart, did not fail to remind her. However, the other "merchant's daughter," Elizabeth, disposed of poor Mary Stuart, and Catherine watched the tragedy from afar, grimly and without sympathy for its victim.

An episode in this tragedy is of some interest from the jeweller's point of view. Mary Stuart's pearls, captured by the Earl of Morton in 1567, were secretly brought to London and offered for a price to Queen Elizabeth. These pearls had formed part of Catherine's bridal parure. She had given them to her son Francis, and he to his young and beautiful bride. Catherine was anxious to regain her pearls, and the French Ambassador in London moved in the matter, but Elizabeth, who, like her father, was greedy of jewels, bought them for twelve thousand crowns, and we may be sure that she kept them. Yet although the virgin Queen loved jewels, she sometimes gave them away to her favourites. The famous ring which she gave to Essex, and which was shown at the Tudor Exhibition a few years ago, was indeed more remarkable for beauty of workmanship than intrinsic value. But she dismissed her princely suitors with rich gifts of jewels, and she sent a valuable emerald to Henry the Fourth of France, with the reminder that "it breaks not till faith is broken." This legendary property of the emerald, which should render it in demand for engagement rings, for which it is in many other ways appropriate, has its counterpart in many other precious stones. The opal is said to show, in its diminished lustre and fire, the approaching illness or death of its wearer. And this imaginary property has had the effect of causing this beautiful gem to be unduly neglected, especially since Sir Walter Scott diffused the notion in his novel, "Anne of Geierstein." The emerald, by the way, is good against poisons, and against venomous reptiles of all kinds:

Blinded like serpents when they gaze
Upon the emerald's virgin blaze.

The most splendid opal ever known in the world of jewels was formerly in the possession of the Empress Josephine. It was called the "Burning of Troy," from the wonderful play and brilliance of its fiery lustre. That might be held to justify the current superstition as to opals, as Josephine's divorce speedily followed its acquisition. But that was not the worst misfortune that might have happened to her, and her lot was happiness indeed

compared with that of the poor Queen whose diamond pendants Josephine used sometimes to wear. And Marie Antoinette's passion, as everybody knows who has read the story of the Necklace, was for diamonds.

The story of the Diamond Necklace has been too often told to bear repetition. But the history of the other beautiful diamonds of the Crown, with which the unhappy Queen in the days of her greatness shone radiant on occasions of state, is not without interest. Chief of these was the Sancy diamond, an historic gem to which all kinds of legends were attached. It was the identical stone, said some, that was lost by Charles the Bold at Granson or Morat. A soldier had picked it up and sold it for a few groschen to a priest, who, guessing its value, disposed of it to the Fuggers of Amsterdam, who had in turn sold it to Henry the Eighth of England. Henry's daughter Mary gave it as a love-gift to Philip of Spain, and thence it had come round in some unexplained way to Monsieur de Sancy, the friend and financial agent of Henry the Fourth of France. It had often been pledged to help Henry in his struggle for the crown, and once had been nearly lost, a faithful servant to whom it was confided having been attacked and killed by robbers. But he had contrived to swallow the stone in his last moments, and De Sancy, sure of his man, found the jewel by cutting open the corpse. All this is more or less legendary, and the authentic history of the Sancy diamond begins with its purchase by James the First, and its subsequent fate illustrates an interesting period in our annals.

The splendid collection of Royal jewels inherited by Charles were dispersed in the Civil Wars. Some fell into the hands of the Parliament and were sold, but the bulk of the most valuable were carried abroad by the Queen, and sold or pawned by her, to supply arms and ammunition for the Royal troops. Among other jewels, the Sancy diamond, and another called "The Mirror of Portugal," had been pledged by Henrietta with the Duc d'Epernon to secure a large sum advanced. As the fortunes of the Royal cause in England declined, the Duc became uneasy about his money, and one day the poor Queen found a "sergent à verge," or what we should call a sheriff's officer, in possession of her apartments at the Palais Royal, with a demand for money owing, and orders to wait till it was paid. The unlucky Queen, who had come to be often in want of a dinner, and who had sometimes to stay in bed to save firing, could only weep and protest her inability to pay. The matter was arranged by Cardinal Mazarin, who was at the bottom of the affair, and who took the diamonds and paid off D'Epernon. The Cardinal bequeathed the jewels with others to Louis the Fourteenth, and with the Crown jewels of France the "Sancy" remained till the Revolution.

The subsequent fate of the "Sancy" was connected with that of the famous blue diamond, perhaps the rarest and most beautiful jewel in the world. It was brought from India by Tavernier, with other splendid stones, and he sold it to the "Roi Soleil," who was the only monarch rich enough to purchase such a gem. At the Revolution, and after the sack of the Tuileries, the Crown jewels were removed to the Garde Meuble, and thence they were stolen, in what is generally recognised as a "put-up job," the authors of which were probably well known at the Jacobins Club. The best part of the jewels were immediately restored, but the blue diamond and the "Sancy" were missing, and were never recovered. Either of them was worth a King's ransom, but in this case it seems probable that they formed the ransom of a nation, and accomplished the destruction of a King.

There is little doubt that the real instigator of the robbery was Danton, then the master spirit of the Revolution. The moment was one of supreme peril for France and her defenders. The army of the confederate monarchs who had undertaken to crush the Revolution and reinstate the monarchy was already quartered in a French province. The Duke of Brunswick, trained in the school of the great Frederick, was in command; his troops were the finest in the world, and with them served nearly all the best officers of the old Royal Army of France. To oppose them, there were only disorganised regiments and tumultuous levies, more formidable to their chiefs than to the enemy, and ready to cry "Treason!" and disband at the first cannon shot. As far as the military situation was concerned, the campaign was lost to the French, and Brunswick might have marched on and laid Paris in ruins, if he would.

But the Duke, it was well known, was averse to the part that had been assigned him: that of desolating and destroying unhappy France in the interests of a dynasty.

The King of Prussia, too, who was with the army, recoiled from the horrors of the impending struggle, with no glory to be won and no profit for the Prussian monarchy. Danton, the tribune, and Dumouriez, the general-in-chief, who had no illusions as to the position, were anxious rather to negotiate than fight. The chief point insisted on by King and Duke was the safety of the Royal Family. Danton and Dumouriez, who seemed to hold France in their hands, gave the most solemn pledges in that behalf. And as a pledge, rather than a bribe, there was the famous blue diamond.

The Duke retreated. France was saved. She only wanted time to organise her resistance, and it was gained by the blue diamond. But the Royal house was doomed to destruction. Ah! they are treacherous things, these diamonds.

From that moment the fate of the jewel remains obscure. If the Duke of Brunswick had it we may conjecture that he gave it to his daughter, the unlucky Caroline, the disowned consort of George the Fourth. And if so, she probably sold it in the course of her struggles for vindication. Anyhow, connoisseurs are generally agreed that the blue diamond in the Hope collection of jewels is the same gem recut, and it is also probable that the "blue drop," which the late Duke of Brunswick possessed, was a chip broken off in the cutting.

The late and last Duke of Brunswick was indeed a model for collectors of jewels. His life was devoted to their acquisition and care. His home in Paris or Geneva was defended like a prison—but to keep people out—with lofty walls, chevaux-de-frise, iron shutters hung with bells to give warning of the burglar's touch. The choicest of his jewels were kept in a safe let into the wall, and the Duke's Spartan couch was spread before it. "Rather my life than my jewels!" the Duke would have said—yet how could he feel himself safe from his own valet-de-chambre? And when the Duke retired to rest, he carefully set the four spring guns that threatened death to the incautious intruder. The one small window of his bed-chamber was carefully shuttered and barred; impregnable locks secured him against the furtive thief, and twelve loaded revolvers lay ready to his hand. Yet, with all this, sometimes he did not sleep well. The Duke bequeathed his jewels and most of his other wealth to the city of Geneva, and the history of this splendid collection has yet to be written.

Short, but strange, too, is the history of another beautiful diamond—the Pigott, brought from India by some nabob of that name. As purchasers of big diamonds are scarce, the owners offered it in 1801 as a prize in a lottery, and valued it at thirty thousand pounds. The winner sold it to a jeweller for six thousand pounds, who found a customer for it in Ali Pacha, of Janina, a famous Turkish satrap, whose rebellion against the Porte was a stirring incident in the peaceful piping times of the 'thirties, but chiefly remembered now for its connection with the romantic plot of "Monte Cristo." The Pasha, vanquished and mortally wounded, but still, like a dying lion, formidable to those about him, determined that his conqueror should not come to possess the two things he valued most in the world, his diamond and his beautiful wife Vasilika. He ordered Vasilika to be strangled, and the diamond to be crushed on an anvil. The diamond was crushed, so they say, but the woman somehow escaped. Perhaps, after all, somebody had presence of mind enough to substitute a bit of glass, and to make his escape with a fine fortune concealed up his sleeve.

The portability of wealth in the form of jewels, the ease with which they may be hidden, or stolen and conveyed away, the risks attending their possession, all no doubt add to the interest and lustre which surround them. They supply an excellent subject for the writer of fiction, and there are few story-tellers, probably, who have not been more or less indebted to them in the concoction of a telling plot.

But it was in sober earnest, and with some prescience of approaching dangers, that a once famous beauty of the Court of Louis the Fifteenth had turned a great part of her wealth into jewels. Madame Du Barry had long been the reigning mistress of the late King; she had given her name to a porcelain of Sèvres; the wealth of France had been poured into her lap. She had a special taste for yellow diamonds, but took all that came in her way. Her jewels, it was said, might vie in magnificence with the hereditary jewels of the Crown. At the King's death she had retired to her splendid villa at Luciennes, and she was buxom still, and only middle-aged, when the revolutionary storm broke out.

After the sack of the Tuileries Madame Du Barry escaped to England, but she had previously buried with her own hands,

aided by the venerable Duc de Brissac, her best and oldest friend, who wielded the spade, all her treasure of jewels at the foot of a tree in the Duc's adjoining park. Safe in England, she heard with horror of the death of the King on the scaffold, and subsequently of the massacre at Versailles in which De Brissac perished. She was now the sole depositary of the secret of her buried treasure, and in despair of regaining it in any other manner, she resolved to return secretly to France, to dig up her diamonds, and bring them back to London. England and France were then nominally at peace, and Madame Du Barry had no difficulty in obtaining papers to substantiate her assumed character.

The one person in all the world to whom Madame Du Barry had shown the most tenderness was a negro named Zamorre, whom she had brought up from a child as page and plaything, but with all the care and solicitude of a mother. On him she was sure that she could rely. To him she had confided the care of her French domains, and he had proved a faithful steward. Oh! she was as sure of him as of herself, and, seeking the shelter of her own home, she trusted herself to his care. But Zamorre had recently been affiliated to the revolutionary centre of the district; he had imbibed some of the revolutionary fervour. Anyhow, he knew that death was the reward for harbouring an émigré. He denounced his mistress to the authorities, who seized her and her treasure together. The "femme Du Barry" was presently trundled, shrieking, to the guillotine, the only one, perhaps, of all the Royalist victims of the Revolution who did not accept fate with dignity. Her jewels helped to furnish forth the armies of the Republic.

Madame Du Barry's jewels were not alone in the part they played in the revolutionary wars. The shrine of Saint Denis, the burial-place of the Capets, was rich with all kinds of gems and jewels, and these were swept into the revolutionary chest. And in 1797, as in 1800, the French cavalry was mounted on horses procured by pledging the Crown jewels. A curious windfall for the Republic was a box full of gems containing the Crown jewels of Sardinia, which the King had pawned with a banker of Amsterdam, and which the Revolutionary Government seized in 1795 when the French occupied the city.

Of the Crown jewels of the present day the stock may be said to be limited, nor are they in the way of being increased. Imagine the face that would be made to a latter-day Chancellor of the Exchequer who proposed to put on a penny to the Income Tax to buy a beautiful diamond for the jewel house! And our English regalia have never recovered from the losses of the Civil Wars. Perhaps the only stone of great historic interest among the Crown jewels is a ruby which forms the centre of the Maltese cross on the Royal crown; and which was given by Pedro of Castille to the Black Prince, and Henry the Fifth wore it on his helm at the battle of Agincourt. The jewel that eclipses all the rest is the Koh-i-noor, the history of which is also a little varied and romantic.

The Arabs, we know, consider the most precious of all stones in the world to be the black meteoric lump called the Kaaba, which is the virtual object of the pilgrimage to Meccah. It fell from heaven, they say, and with every appearance of truth; but then, they add, it was a beautiful white hyacinth, and it is the sins of mankind that have turned it black. No one pretends that the Koh-i-noor fell from heaven, and, indeed, its reputé is of rather a sinister character, and would indicate an origin in another direction, for legends connect it with remote ages of Hindoo history, where its influence was always more or less malignant. In the fifteenth century the jewel came into the possession of the Great Mogul, and formed the centre of the wonderful Peacock Throne. It was then the biggest diamond in the world, and weighed more than six hundred carats. Since then it has been cut and almost ruined under the Moguls, and recut with considerable waste at the jewel house, so that it is far from being the premier diamond of the age.

Certainly the Koh-i-noor brought no luck to the Moguls. And the fame of it, and of the other wondrous riches of Delhi, brought on the scourge of Nadir Shah's invasion from Persia, who carried off the big diamond and the Peacock Throne to his own haunts. But Nadir was soon after assassinated in his tent, and in the confusion that ensued, an Afghan chief, one Ahmed, seized the precious spoil and decamped with it. The credit its possession brought him enabled him to set up a dynasty of his own at Candahar. Short and full of trouble are the annals of the Afghan Khans, and one of Ahmed's descendants, deposed by a brother, escaped with the precious jewel, and took refuge with Runjeet Singh, the Lion of Lahore. By dint of threats and a

short course of starvation, Runjeet induced his guest to give up the diamond—as it were to pay for his board. On his death-bed, Runjeet was urged to present the stone, so precious but so malign, to the great image of Juggernaut, as he is popularly called, to form an eye for the renowned idol. Runjeet consented, but his heirs preferred to risk the ill luck and keep the diamond. The ill luck came, with the English fighting and dispersing the Sikh chivalry, and taking possession of Lahore. Then the guardians of the stone were prevailed upon to give up the stone to John Company, and "may its luck go with it" was doubtless their secret prayer. Anyhow, John Company did not thrive much after then, although they soon presented the jewel to the Queen; which may be presumed to have broken the charm.

Anyhow, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, Runjeet's descendant, whom it was endeavoured to tame into a kind of model English squire, would have been very glad to take the jewel back again, and, it is said, bitterly resented its possession by the Crown, although, after all, his title, like the rest, was founded on the "good old rule, the simple plan."

The story of the great Russian treasure, the Orloff diamond, is even more of an "Arabian Nights'" and romantic character. The stone was stolen by Nadir Shah from the Moguls, and with many other jewels was lost sight of in the confusion attending the Shah's assassination. Some time afterwards a wretched-looking Afghan, so the story goes, made his appearance at Bussorah, where the Shafras, three Armenian brothers, kept a store. The Afghan opened his beggar's wallet before them. Their eyes were dazzled with the beauty and brilliance of the jewels disclosed. There was the Moon of Mountains, a magnificent diamond; a sapphire, called the Eye of Allah; and a ruby and emerald of immense value. The merchants concealed their emotions, turned over the gems slightingly, and bade the man call again. But the Afghan mistrusted his friends and came no more. With infinite pains and trouble the brothers tracked him step by step, and at last ran him to earth at Baghdad. There they discovered that he had sold his treasures, for what he could get, to a Jew dealer. All the blandishments of the brothers were of no avail; the Jew knew the value of his prize, and the wealth that was within his grasp. But he committed the indiscretion of taking a friendly meal with the brothers, at which the Afghan was also a guest. The meats were poisoned, and Jew and Afghan fell dead from the table, and their bodies were hurled into the river. The Shafras overhauled the store of the Jew, carried off the precious stones, and made their way in all haste towards Constantinople. But, with all their expedition, the elder contrived to poison the two younger brothers on the way, and arrived at Stamboul the sole possessor of the jewels. He did not, however, think it prudent to dispose of his prize there, and made for St. Petersburg, where Catherine ruled, the Semiramis of the North. And here eventually he sold the diamond called the Moon of Mountains to Count Orloff, who presented it to his Royal mistress, and as the Orloff diamond it now figures among the Imperial jewels.

Another famous diamond in the Russian collection is the Regent, acquired at the sale of the French Crown jewels in 1887. This also has had its little adventures. Pope alludes to its history in the lines:

> Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,
> An honest factor stole a gem away.

But the generally received version is that the diamond was found by a slave working in the mines, say of Golconda, who secreted it and made his escape to the coast, where he had the luck to be picked up by an English ship. He showed his prize to the master, and proposed to share its proceeds. But the honest skipper had no faith in shares, and simplified matters by throwing the poor slave overboard. Reaching Madras the skipper sold the diamond for a thousand pounds, spent the money in drink and debauchery, and hanged himself at the finish. Governor Pitt, of Madras, heard of the stone, and bought it of the dealer for some ten thousand pounds. Recognising its value he sent home his son Robert with it, who sailed in the "Loyal Cook" from Madras in 1702, and presently succeeded in selling it to the Regent of France for one hundred thousand pounds. The Pitts rose to some distinction after this, and the great Earl of Chatham and his even more famous son owed something to the naked Indian. The diamond remained among the Crown jewels of France; was stolen at the Revolution in the robbery of the Garde Meuble, but restored by the thieves. Napoleon wore it in his sword-hilt as First Consul—it was not known as the Pitt diamond then, we may guess—and it figured in state pageants till the collapse of the Second Empire. Finally it was sold to Russia, as already stated.

Splendid as are the Russian jewels, there is a diamond hard to beat in the treasure house of Vienna. It is as titular Grand Duke of Tuscany that the Austrian Emperor possesses the Florentine, a magnificent yellow diamond of one hundred and thirty-three carats. Some say that this and not the Sancy is the identical stone lost by Charles the Bold. And the Crown of Portugal possesses an enormous stone, which if really a diamond would eclipse all others, as it weighs some sixteen hundred and eighty carats. Munich boasts its pink diamonds, and Dresden can show a unique green one which it owes to Augustus, the strong, the fat, the dissolute, commemorated by Carlyle in his "Frederick the Great."

It is a curious fact that Indian diamonds are gradually disappearing from the West, and finding their way back to their mother country. When any great collection is broken up, the agents of some native Indian potentate will be found buying up the best Indian stones. No longer can we say:

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks.

Belinda's diamonds are now either from Brazilian mines, undiscovered when Pope penned his lines, or from the still more prolific mines of South Africa. But, though these may be as fine, they have not the halo of mystery and romance about them that distinguished the historic jewel "of the old mine."

IDLERS BOTH.

A COMPLETE STORY.

To the few who have unwittingly chanced upon the place in their coast-wanderings, Gorebay ever remains a synonym for dulness of the deadliest, most soul-wearying kind. It boasts no pier, no band, no niggers, no promenade worth the name, no hotels, no anything that makes life endurable to the thousands who yearly seek the seaside "only for their health's benefit." True, there is a low wooden jetty, three feet wide, which is supposed to afford dry-shod access to the boats, but unfortunately it ends prematurely thirty yards above the water's edge when the tide is at ebb—as the tide generally is when one wants to hire a boat; then again, even if the village has no hotel it possesses a particularly cosy-looking inn — midway down the wriggling street which is Gorebay—whose limited accommodation is often put to stress in "the season." For, notwithstanding its drawbacks, Gorebay has a season, when the same elderly ladies and the same gentlemen—fogeys fossilised—may be seen year after year loitering along the beach or sitting, book in lap, among the rocks under the gaunt white cliffs. Responsible fathers of families, too, find Gorebay excellent in many ways—for their wives and offspring; the sand-dunes being delightful places for the youngsters, while lodgings are very clean and reasonable.

Yet, although Mark Burgess was neither a lady, an old fogey, nor a paterfamilias, he seemed in no hurry to turn his back upon Gorebay.

For the last two years he had represented his father's firm at Georgetown, whence, after a fierce bout with the fever, he had been sent home to recruit. His London doctor advised him to pick up his strength at some restful seaside place.

"Try Gorebay, Mark," recommended his uncle. "It's a nice, quiet spot—good bathing—splendid ozone. You couldn't do better than Gorebay."

And Mark was trying Gorebay. To all appearances it suited him admirably. His sunken cheeks filled out, his eyes lost their dimness, the wan hue of his face was ousted in favour of a healthy bronze. Still he made no move homeward. The reason therefor: he was in love.

He had passed her a score of times in the cobble-paved road abutting on the shingle. Often she had an old lady for companion—Mark used to think it was her mother till he came to know that the "grim dragon" was her aunt; sometimes she was alone. Tall and shapely was she, her pretty face ever abeam with merriment, her eyes with life and youthful roguishness — a sweet witch in cream crepon. From the instant Mark set gaze upon her, his was a parlous case. Yet he did not attempt to free himself; to him the shackles were of roses. Somehow he learned her name—Nora Stafford—and that she and her relative were staying at Wood's Farm, just outside the town. As there seemed little chance of obtaining a formal introduction, Mark was glad of the informal, if somewhat ludicrous, one that happened his way. It befell in this wise.

The stiff land breeze was hardly felt in the sheltered nook among the rocks where Nora and her aunt were sitting. In that spot it tempered not at all the hot glare of the noonday sun, to screen herself from which—in other words, to escape freckles

and an unbecoming gipsy tint of skin—Nora had hoisted her sunshade. A dainty thing of pink it was, covered with torchon lace; Mark could distinguish it unerringly half a mile off. Suddenly an impish gust burst round the corner, whisked the parasol from her grasp, and trundled it away, hoop fashion, jerkily over the sands into the sea. Handle upwards, there it wobbled on the outgoing tide, like a rudderless Dutch hoy under bare poles. While her aunt vainly tried to hook the runaway with her umbrella, Nora stood helplessly looking on as wind and wave drifted it further and further away.

There are a few crises in which a man is clearly at advantage. Here was one. Hastening forward, Mark Burgess swashed knee-deep into the sea and brought the would-be voyager back to land. As thoroughly as he could he shook the brine out of it, and passed it over to its owner with his best bow. She smiled and thanked him graciously—the thanks being for the recovery of her property, and the smile, as Mark half fancied, being at the grotesque figure he cut in saturated flannels tight-glued to his shrunken shanks. These were not the conditions under which he would have chosen, had choice been open, to appear before any lady whose esteem he was anxious to gain. He could not wonder at her laughing at him—he laughed at himself.

After this, he did not see her for several days. Towards the end of the week, however, as he was returning from his morning's dip by way of the inland path, he came across her in the hollow between the hills; where the Gushet Beck chatters noisily, like a little dog with a big bark, down to the sea. She was seated on the bank, sketch-block on knee, limning the grey lichen-grown mill, with its black over-shot wheel and the series of yeasty cascades beyond. Mark took heart at her gay "good morning"; it seemed so like a direct invitation to linger. At all events, reading that meaning into it, he never budged from her side till she was about to return to the farm. Morning after morning they met in this dingle, with scant benefit to the drawing.

Mark never cared to inquire too curiously respecting Nora's aunt. At the outset Nora had told him that "dear Aunt Helen found it such a pull over the hills," and Mark was quite content that it should be so. True, he often met her with her niece in the village, but on these occasions Nora merely nodded her recognition and passed on. If anything of oddness struck Mark in her bearing, he comforted himself with the confident assurance that she had sound and sufficient reason for it; as for the rest, he was willing to abide her good time for an introduction to "dear Aunt Helen."

One morning, three weeks after they had first foregathered there, Nora did not appear at the trysting-place, and for the whole of that day Mark was on tenterhooks. His mind teemed with despondent questionings. Was she ill? Had she been suddenly recalled home? Would he never see her again? and so forth. He cursed his idiocy in not making his confession earlier—for he had fully determined to make it. Of course he was aware that such a proceeding would be considered injudicious, precipitate. He knew next to nothing of the girl herself, or of her parents, her friends, her upbringing. He had heard of men doing the like before—fellows whom he had straightway voted fools.

Howbeit, he had small warrant for anxiety, since next day saw Nora in her customary moss-stuffed seat by the Beck, engrossed in the same sketch. Mark's face brightened.

"No, I couldn't come yesterday," she said, answering his first words. "Aunt had one of her dreadful nerve attacks, and of course I could not leave her. Oh, yes, she is much better to-day, thank you, or I should not be here now."

"And I should have been deprived of——"

"By-the-bye," interrupted Nora, "she can't understand how it is I am so long finishing this one little drawing; and really, I have been an unconscionable time over it."

"I am afraid the blame must be laid to my score," Mark put in tentatively. "In interrupting your work as I have done, I've been inconsiderate and selfish."

"Oh, no, Mr. Burgess; I don't mean that. I've had a lazy fit on, that is all." Then with a laugh, and an arch uplifting of her eyes, she added: "If your self-reproach were deserved, you don't suppose I should be rude enough to say so?"

"And if you did say it," Mark went on, "I should plead, in all seriousness, my utter inability to help myself. I have been drawn here by——"

"No, don't be serious," exclaimed Nora, her colour heightened; "I don't like serious people. It is ever so much nicer to be merely frivolous."

"But there are subjects on which a man must be serious—on which a woman would justly resent any approach to banter as an unpardonable insult. Nora, you cannot but know what I would say."

Hesitating for a moment, but not in expectation of a reply, he looked down at her as she sat there, her hands tight-clasped about her knees, her crimsoned face the battle-ground of embarrassment and dismay. Suddenly she sprang upright, her eyes rounded with a new dread. From the point where the upward path pierced the tree-belt, Aunt Helen was laboriously picking her way down the slope towards them.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" cried Nora, aghast. "What shall I do? Pray, go now. Oh, Mr. Burgess, please go now."

An inauspicious disposition to mutiny leapt into Mark's breast, but on second thoughts he judged it wiser to obey. Striding up the hill he raised his hat as he passed the old lady. She stood stock-still in the path and stared fiercely at him through her uplifted eye-glasses; if ever glance was meant to blast and wither, clearly that one was. Although her lips seemed bursting with the angry speech behind them, she made no other return to his salute, and Mark, looking scarce less sheepish than he felt, topped the brow of the hill and so down into Gorebay.

That evening he received a letter, the first and last he ever had from Miss Stafford. Here is a sample of it:

"There is no need for pretence now. Yes, I can guess what you were going to say, and I am deeply grieved if my manner, or anything I may have said, led you to suppose that I regarded you in any other light than that of a new and congenial friend. In humdrum Gorebay one is grateful whenever the prospect of a cheery chat opens out before one, and until you arrived I must confess the dulness of the place weighed me down. If my gratitude was so excessive as to be liable to misconstruction, I shame myself by acknowledging it and I ask your forgiveness. At the same time I trust that I shall not lose a friend because I cannot accept a lover."

More of it there was in a like strain, but we will pry no further.

After reading it, Mark abstractedly dangled the letter between thumb and forefinger. He had not expected this; for a time he could not realise it. Consternation smote in upon him till it numbed his brain; he was a thing helpless, callous, incapable of idea. Then, like a river in spate, pride came to aid, flooding the sluggish current of his thought, breaking impulsively through his barriers of sadness, burying his torments, bearing his despair away to oblivion, surging, bubbling in anger. Anger, too, against himself. Rejected! And by whom? Forsooth, by the flippant daughter of some shop-keeper or farmer of the Midlands—from which class and quarter the Gorebay clientèle was almost wholly drawn. Faugh! He had demeaned himself—was still further demeaning himself by allowing his mind to dwell upon the paltry subterfuges contained in the letter. He would forget both it and her. In that resolve, Mark savagely crushed the scribble in his fist and tossed it into the fire-blaze.

"I've been an infatuated fool," he muttered hoarsely. "Fit sport for the caprice of a heartless woman."

In the morning he quitted Gorebay for good. The local train went no further than Wolden Junction, where Mark put himself fretfully to pacing the narrow platform till the London express was due. Before he had doubled the station's length he received a hearty thwack between the shoulder-blades.

"Burgess—for a sov.," and a dapper young fellow thrust out his hand. "I thought I couldn't mistake that noble form, although it's years since I last cast eyes on it. Going up to town, eh? Wish I was, too. But duty calls me the other way—to a little, poking, gloomy hole twenty miles off called Gorebay."

"Duty, Haydon—and at Gorebay?" said Mark enquiringly.

"Yes, my fiancée is staying there with some relatives," replied Haydon. "You perhaps didn't know that I am to be married in October?"

"Under those circumstances, of course, Gorebay won't be dull to you."

"Well, I'd rather be in London. This journey has been forced upon me, as it were. Nora—that's Miss Stafford's name—wrote to me yesterday, saying that some fellow or other would persist in pestering her with his attentions—there are cads of that sort, you know—and asking me to come down and rid her of the annoyance. It's a deuced unpleasant job," and little Haydon fingered his moustache complacently, "but I suppose I shall have to punch the fellow's head if he doesn't clear off."

As he looked down at his companion, the faintest smile hovered about the corners of Mark's mouth, but it left his face paler and more sternly cut.

"I hope it won't come to the punching of heads," he said quietly.

"People of that kidney understand no other kind of argument," responded Haydon. "By the way, I hear you are not going back to that benighted region where you have been hidden for the last year or two, but are to be stationed permanently in London. If that is so, I shall have the pleasure of making Nora known to you."

"Your informant was in error," said Mark quickly. "I am going back. There are friendships and associations connected with Georgetown that I would not willingly lose."

"Even at the risk of a second dose of fever?" queried Haydon, arching his eyebrows. "Well, there's no accounting for tastes. But here comes my train. Good morning, old chap, good morning. No doubt I shall see you again before you leave England."

Mark turned away with firm-fixed lips.

"Perhaps you will," he muttered, "but I think it's hardly likely."

AVIGNON.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

First impressions of places and people are far from trustworthy. Otherwise I should have condemned this famous old city of the Popes out of hand on a couple of hours' acquaintance.

I travelled to it from Marseilles late in the day, in fact by a returning market train. The plump, russet-cheeked peasantry who packed themselves and their baskets about me so that I was fain to gasp for breath, chattered as such people do after a day's visit to a capital. They also smoked—at least the men did. It was a pestilential and tumultuous experience. Even the poultry—alive—in the baskets upon my neighbours' laps did not care for it. They added to the Babel by crowing in a half-asphyxiated manner, and by periodical furious attempts to burst their bonds.

It was a wild sort of evening—for the south, very wild. Whenever the train stopped, the roar of the wind outvoiced even these hearty tongues of Provence. At times, too, the rain dashed against the windows as if it meant to get at us. Through the dimmed glass I could see the funereal cypresses of the land nodding and scraping before the storm. They plant these sombre objects along the railway for miles. They act as a barrier between the rolling stock and the terrible north wind. It is quite conceivable that but for the cypresses the force of this north wind, or mistral, would bodily overturn a train, now and then.

A loquacious old person with a stomach much too large for an ordinary railway carriage—and especially a French one, which leaves less passage room than ours—soon coaxed me into conversation.

"Monsieur does very wrong," he had the goodness to say at the top of his voice, "in thinking to pass the night at Avignon. There is nothing in Avignon to attract monsieur. The hotels are horribly provincial. If monsieur will be advised by me, he will leave the train at Arles. I myself live at Arles, and so I have the honour to know."

As politely as possible, I told the old fellow that I did not so very much mind if the hotels were provincial. I wished to trifle with historical and romantic Avignon, not with the hotel larder. But my counsellor was obdurate.

Indeed, when at length we stopped at his native place he took it for granted that I had yielded to his persuasions.

"I myself," he said, with a noble bow, "shall have the honour to conduct you to the best hotel in Arles. I am known to the proprietor, and a word from me—you understand."

He was exceedingly obstinate, in short. I told him my ticket was for Avignon, and that both my luggage and I meant to proceed thither. He said that was only a detail, and without delay called an official to confirm him in his belief that my ticket would be available for continuing the journey the next day.

I really expected that between them, these two impetuous persons of Provence—for the official was as considerate of me as the other—would take me by the leg and carry me off as a trophy to the "best hotel in Arles."

But they lost patience at length—a thing I had done long before.

"Monsieur must, I suppose, do as he desires," the old gentleman said with a shrug as the train whistled; "but it is a pity, for the hotel in Avignon, as I have said——".

I wished him "good night," and sat down at my ease again.

An hour later I passed under Avignon's mediæval walls—in pouring rain—and entered the Hôtel Crillon. The walls excited my esteem in spite of the rain. I

did not regret having persisted in my obstinacy.

The old fellow was right, however, about the hotels, if that of Crillon is a fair sample of Avignon's accommodation for travellers. It was picturesquely grimy, and the waiter did not even apologise for the miserable pretence at a supper which he put before me.

Afterwards I crossed the road to the most assuming of the adjacent cafés to enjoy a cigar. I enjoyed a surprising spectacle of juvenile idiocy as well. There were a dozen lads in the room trying who could get tipsy the soonest. They drank glass after glass of ale and smoked large cigars. The proprietor of the place stood with his hands on his paunch, laughing till he cried at their proceedings. But the youngsters soon passed from the noisy to the incapable stage. Half of them dropped their heads into their hands. Two or three lurched off, the proprietor kindly holding the door for them and patting them on the backs.

This same excellent person came afterwards to me with the genial remark:

"That's life for you!"

He did not, however, seem well pleased when I replied without circumlocution:

"Yes; the life of a pig."

It was still raining with fiendish energy when I recrossed the road, and withdrew up the ill-smelling stairs of my hotel to my catafalque of a bed.

So far Avignon had not made a bright mark on my mind, though I had learnt that a cup of coffee and a liqueur glass of fine cognac costs in it but thirty cents, or threepence. I anticipated the morrow somewhat keenly.

But alas! the morning opened in the maddest of moods, with a rattling mistral and rain. I was clearly doomed to see Avignon at its worst as far as the weather was concerned. And when it behoved me to face the wind in the Rue de la République—which runs due north and south—I needed no commentary on the vigour of this notorious infliction. Very early in Avignon's history, the Emperor Augustus is said to have erected here a temple to the wind. One may be excused for wondering what sort of worship the priests of this queer cult tendered to so brutal a divinity.

Still, having resigned myself to my unfortunate weather experiences, I tried my best to forget the raging storm, the rolling black clouds low overhead, and the furious rain which descended as if it meant to expunge the weaker parts of this old city of the Popes.

There is much to see in Avignon. A conscientious tourist may run through the gamut of its leading sights in half a week—with a proper regard for them—but I had only two days at my disposal. It seemed to me that I could afford therefore to be reckless, and take things as they came, rather than attempt to inspect the city categorically.

Accordingly, having walked up Republic Street's entire length, and found myself near the cathedral, I entered it. I had paused for a moment or two by "Brave Crillon's" statue. Crillon was one of Henry of Navarre's valorous warriors. The King thought well of him. "Brave Crillon," his Majesty once wrote to him, "you know how I loved you when I was King of Navarre; how I esteemed and valued you. Now that I am King (of France) I think no less of you, and honour you as much as any gentleman in my realm, and entreat you to believe it. Wherefore, brave Crillon, God have you in His holy keeping.—Henry." That is a letter any man might have been proud to receive from such a monarch; and Avignon is naturally proud of the honour thus done to one of her children.

I expected great things from a church whence seven Popes in succession sent forth blessings and excommunications to have effect throughout the whole of the Catholic world. If not a rival of St. Peter's of Rome, it ought, I fancied, to come a good second to it in magnificence and general impressiveness.

What an illusion, to be sure!

Its façade is barely striking, and its interior is dark and gloomy as a tomb. There were names scrawled about its exterior walls, on the statuary, and elsewhere; and for a moment or two ere pushing its portal I tarried in shelter with two little schoolboys in blue smock frocks, who hummed a profane air—here, in one of the spots of the most august memories in Christendom. Workmen were hammering and singing up above on the tower, which bears a mammoth figure of the Virgin for a finial, in the teeth of the wind and the rain. And the Calvary in front of the porch dripped water from all its angles most dismally.

But though it was thus forlorn outside, it was worse within. A couple of clergy were mumbling a mass. There was no congregation save an old woman, over whose legs I stumbled in the darkness. Nor

was even she a voluntary attendant. She was the prop of one of the clergy—an aged canon, weak and blind. I have seen few more affecting sights than the one which Avignon's cathedral—a church said to have been consecrated in Anno Domini 799 by the visible hand of Jesus Christ—afforded me when this morning mass was ended. The old canon sat in his chair and turned his blind eyes this way and that expectantly. Then the woman approached him, and slowly led him across the nave—he bowed his old head mechanically to the altar—and out by a little door. It was as pathetic a spectacle, in its way, as that of the white marble throne on which five hundred years ago the Popes sat and felt their dignity.

Until the mass was over, I leaned against the wall by a chapel, and gazed dimly at a stained glass window. On this window the figures of a Pope and a Queen were represented, face to face: the former with a bag of money in his hand, the latter with a deed of conveyance. The superscription was as follows: "His Holiness, Clement the Sixth, buys from the Queen Jeanne of Provence the town of Avignon." What a fiction it is! The real history of the transaction is quite different. Her Majesty Jeanne—a mere girl of twenty—disliking her husband, had him assassinated. She loved Louis of Tarentum, her accomplice in this murder, and wished to marry him. To gain her ends she visited Avignon. Eight Cardinals met her and escorted her under a canopy of cloth of gold through the town. In due course the Pope absolved her from her crime, and gave her the necessary dispensation to marry a man under such a ban. And in exchange Avignon became a Papal property. True, a sum of eighty thousand florins was mentioned as a matter of form, but it was never paid.

The church is more like a crypt than anything else. The faint light which stole from its lantern windows showed the spoiled frescoes there and elsewhere. I felt rather than realised that I was among tombs galore. Crillon lies here. "Reader, history will tell you more of him," says his epitaph in conclusion. Of the hundred and fifty Cardinals and Prelates buried in the church, one does not crave any particular information.

The sacristan, who took me in hand when the ecclesiastics had departed, had an easy task.

"The darkness is a feature!" he said, and would fain have had me stand in the middle of the nave and exclaim about it.

Then he showed me the two tombs of John the Twenty-second and Benedict the Twelfth; both interesting specimens of Gothic work, though in their present state and situation scarcely so convincing as they are commonly thought to be. The ruffians of the Revolution have shorn them of much of their glory, and initialists have for a century or so paid their full homage to the marble of the twenty-second John.

Originally both these monuments were elsewhere. The one annoyed the canons and the other incommoded the members of a brotherhood of tailors. The will of the canons and the tailors was powerful enough to alter the work of the Popes.

My sacristan did not offer to interpret for me the dying frescoes. He gesticulated to imply that grief for the inevitable is futile, and mentioned the vestments. These stiff and gorgeous objects of silk and gold and silver embroidery he lifted out of their presses for me one by one. I had, however, seen finer work in meaner places than Avignon. It was not to be expected that when the Popes returned to Rome they would leave many of their portable treasures behind them.

Ere departing from the cathedral—which by the way is said to have been founded by Saint Martha in honour of "the still-living Virgin"—I climbed the tower of the belfry. The place was ajar with the echoing and reverberation of hammers and the shouts of gay-hearted artisans. It was also extremely dusty, thanks to the disturbed masonry. View I had next to none. The mistral still raged. Inky clouds ruled over Provence, and the Rhone looked like a black score across a melancholy landscape. The few citizens of Avignon to be seen in the square below were cloaked to the eyebrows.

I had thought, in my ignorance, to have seen some memorial of Petrarch and Laura de Sade in Avignon's cathedral. But Petrarch's place is not here, where his heart was not, except while Laura lived. In his "Epistle to Posterity," he tells us only too plainly why he liked not the town. "We dwelt in a town called Avignon, where the Roman Pontiff holds the Church of Jesus Christ in shameful exile. It was here, on the banks of a river exposed to the most impetuous of winds, that I spent my childhood with my parents, and afterwards my youth, devoted to the foolish errors of that time of life." But it was here also that on the Monday in Holy Week, 1327, at six o'clock in the morning, he saw Laura's face for the first time. He has made that face

as deathless as the memory of his distaste for Avignon apart from her.

Petrarch lies in Rome. As for Laura, her bones are now one knows not where. When Arthur Young travelled in France before the Revolution, he saw her resting-place in the Church of the Cordeliers. It was, he tells us, "nothing but a stone in the pavement, with a figure engraven on it, partly effaced, surrounded by an inscription in Gothic letters, and another in the wall adjoining, with the armorial of the family of Sade." Whatever it was, it has now disappeared, with the church itself. They had not much respect for such sentimental trifles during the last decade of the eighteenth century, when a Temple of Reason was established here in Avignon as well as in Paris.

By the way, what would not one of our latter-day journalists have given to have been with Francis the First of France when he paid his tribute of regard to Laura's memory? This monarch was not content to see her tombstone. He had her exhumed, and contemplated her very bones. With her body they found a leaden casket, containing some of Petrarch's verses; and it is said that the cultured monarch had the impudence to tack some lines of his own to those of Petrarch. It surely was impudence, even though the sentiment of the Royal Prince was of its kind both good and true.

From the cathedral I proceeded to the adjoining rock, which was the site of the earliest settlement here, and for awhile sheltered under the noble stone pines, which grow so magnificently even on so elevated and exposed a site. According to certain professors in derivations, this rock gives Avignon its name: from the Greek "Aouenion," lord of the waters. One can well understand it.

Even on this most comfortless of days I tasted something of the far-extending panorama of land and water to be had from the rock. The Rhone flows at its base; beyond is the Durance. No more convenient perch could have been found in all Rhone's course for levying tribute on passing boats. Across the river is Villeneuve, a mass of mediæval towers. Between the two fortresses navigators might expect a sorry time of it, unless they had conciliated the lords of the land.

It is a superb standpoint. One may dabble in historical reverie all the day on such a spot.

The Bridge of St. Bénézet below is a relic such as we have few of in England. There are but three full arches left to it, with the chapel of St. Nicolas still standing on the first buttress from the land. It dates from the twelfth century, and is the work of one of those bridge-building confraternities about which M. Jusserand, in his "English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages," has told us so much. The name Bénézet perpetuates the head of the brotherhood.

However, the more romantic populace prefer not to accept this rational account of the origin of the famous bridge. They have designed a legend which has superior points in it. According to the legend, Bénézet was a young shepherd, who one day, while tending his sheep, heard the divine voice thrice bidding him go to Avignon and build a bridge over the Rhone. "What will become of my flock in that case?" he enquired. "It shall be looked after," replied the voice, "and as for you, what you shall do will be told you and money shall not be wanting." From his sheep young Bénézet went boldly into Avignon, and there found the Bishop preaching a sermon to his congregation. He did not hesitate. He stepped into their midst—doubtless to the Bishop's dissatisfaction—and exclaimed: "Listen, all of you. My Lord Jesus Christ sends me to make a bridge over the Rhone." As an analogous case, one may suppose a simple young collier nowadays forcing his way into Parliament, while the House of Commons is sitting, and crying out that he has a divine commission to bridge the English Channel. Naturally, the Bishop resented the lad's interference with his sermon. In fact poor Bénézet was condemned there and then to be chastised. But he repeated to his custodian the words he had cried in church. "What! you! a mere shepherd!" retorted the other. "When no King, not even great Charlemagne himself, has dared to attempt it! Well, you shall have a trial before being punished. Do you see this stone? If you can lift it I will believe that God sends you here." The lad was to be put to the proof before the Bishop and the people. It seemed a hopeless business, however, as the stone was thirteen feet long, seven broad, and proportionably thick. But Bénézet shouldered it as if it had been a besom, and, followed by the astonished Bishop, the civil authorities, and all the people, he carried it to the riverside, and set it down with the remark: "It will do for the foundation." No wonder that money enough was now speedily forthcoming, that

the bridge was built, and that the shepherd lad was eventually canonised.

Whichever account of Avignon's bridge's origin we accept it is impossible not to admire the bridge itself as it was centuries ago. The missing arches may readily be supplied by the imagination, and the whole carried across the river—more than half a mile in length.

The Rhone has done damage enough to Avignon at one time and another. It has wrecked the bridge utterly. But one may be grateful to it that it has spared the fragment of it that remains.

The relic is of course no longer a highway. The Bridge of St. Bénézet has been superseded. But pious Avignon remembers the founder on an annual fête day in July. Bénézet's remains—or at least, part of them—have been transferred from the little chapel against whose base Rhone's waters are eternally chafing with a song of menace more or less loud, to the church of St. Didier, in the heart of the town.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LIII. BROKEN-HEARTED.

It was a long drive to Meretown from the Rothery valley. The lake must be headed, then the ground slowly ascended till a smaller sheet of water was reached, in which steep hills bathed their feet, while above them eagles sailed slowly. When the road at last reached the summit of the pass the view was very glorious, and one could look back and catch sight of the trees in the valley, and take a last look at the glittering waters of the lake.

The wayside inn offered rest and refreshment, such as it was, for man and beast, before travellers started on the long drive down into Meretown.

It was Jim Oldcorn, and not one of the new grooms, who had received very early orders to bring round the trap for Mr. Bethune so that he might catch the morning train. Forster's luggage consisted of one small portmanteau, and as he came out of the Palace hastily carrying it himself and fixing it in the trap, Jim Oldcorn noticed how ill the gentleman looked; further, he saw that when he took his place beside him no one came out to bid him good-bye, and that he himself said not a word.

Oldcorn was not one to break the silence easily, so his words were few, but he noted that Mr. Bethune only once looked back at the Palace, and that was not till he reached the inn at the top of the pass. He stood then on the ridge and, refusing to go indoors, remained motionless in the raw morning air, gazing eastward to where the sun was slowly rising from a bank of grey clouds.

Forster's face was so much changed in the few hours that had elapsed since his interview with Penelope that his friends would hardly have recognised him. He looked at things around him as if he did not see them. He was only conscious of one thing, Philip's face, and he fully understood only three words, "Philip was murdered." Then he realised that he was tied and bound to this secret for the rest of his life. The old man was mad, of course. No one could convict him, and, if it were known, he would merely be placed in a madhouse; but how could he, Forster Bethune, proclaim this thing? Penelope had told him, and the man who had done it was her father. He could only fly, fly far away from the Rothery glen, but even flight could not kill memory. Who was in truth Philip's murderer if not himself? Who should be given up to justice if not he, who had brought this about, indirectly, perhaps, but not less surely? Why had he ever fled from his duty to come back to England, to this fatal valley of the Rothery, and to——?

He was Philip's murderer, and yet he might not proclaim it.

He suddenly roused himself enough to know that he was looking out towards the Rothery trees, and it seemed—though it really was impossible—that he could, from where he stood, hear the roar of the hateful stream, which was the only dirge Philip would ever have sung over him.

As Forster stood there with folded arms all the history of the past two years unrolled itself slowly before his eyes. Where were his great aims, what had become of his noble ambition? Where was the Forster who could proclaim peace and goodwill to his brethren, and tell them there was a noble life to be lived even in this world? Where was the enthusiasm and the joy in his belief? Was it gone? Had his sin blotted it all out?

Here, however, Jim Oldcorn broke in upon his thoughts.

"It's Jenny Mason as has been tellin'

a varra quear ghoast tale. Last night it cum farder and farder doon the road, and Jenny's hair grew stiffer an' stiffer, and her tung drier an' drier. She was fairly flaysum, and her knees wer' rattlin' tagiddar like a mill hopper."

"A ghost—whose ghost?" asked Forster, as if he believed in apparitions.

"She didn't ken what ta duat nor whose ghoast it wer'. Sumtimes it appear't an' sumtimes vanish't; his face was as white as a cloot."

"Foolish tales, Jim; the spirits of the departed can be near without being seen."

"Wall—if ye was to see one, sir, it wud knock the life out of ye as wid live herrings; we aw laff till our toime comes."

"We must hurry forward," said Forster, getting into the trap.

"Yes, sir, sartin sure. I told Jeanie there not to be flaysum aboot ghoasts. Women be fearful creatures, so aw told her, and says I, 'Jeanie, ah doot thoo'll be takkin ta the heels if thoo even sees a fla-cro' in a field i' tatie time."

Then the two relapsed into silence, and the only sounds heard were those of the wheels and the horse's hoofs upon the road.

Very slowly Forster was resolving that he could not go home. He could not face all those dear ones, who believed in him and who loved him—so unworthy to be loved. No, he would go straight to the settlement, and there he would try to expiate his crime. There he might lead the life of an anchorite of old, not in literal solitude, but in the solitude which to him would be worse—the solitude of the soul which has fallen from its high estate.

He must go to London, and there he could find out all particulars and get a few necessary things, and then he would say good-bye to all that made life beautiful: the love of home, and the society and friendship of his equals.

This was the resolve that shaped itself in his mind as the carriage drove over those long, dreary miles with only the wild hills around, seeming to reproach the man who was flying from himself and from his own treachery.

At last, after what seemed to him long ages, the station came in sight, a little mountain station which tourists enlivened in summer weather, but which was now deserted and sad.

"Ye'll be cumin' back soon, sir," said Jim Oldcorn with a smile. "The poor young master wud be for ye to stop rayder langer with us if he wur alive; hooiver he died he wur a good man. It's noah use moorning fur the dead, it's moorning fur the heedstrong, loike our King, as we shud be; he's gud for nowt at aw, but he was oalas a one to hoald his own. Gud day, sir, and aw's sartin sure ye'll cum agin. The Princess will nivver see neahboddy like yursel' that will be suitin' of her."

"Good-bye, Jim Oldcorn. I shall never come back. You must tell the Princess that—that——"

The train was coming, there was no more time, and Forster could only just end his sentence.

"Tell her, Oldcorn, that I said, 'God bless her, and good-bye,' for I shall never see her again."

"Ah'll tell her iverything. Ah'll keep nowt back," said Oldcorn, and then he shook his head, and as he turned the horse's head he thought to himself:

"He looks as if he wur keepit sum'at to hissel'."

Then with one more shake of his head, Jim Oldcorn began his return journey, pondering upon many things.

Dora Bethune had once more begun her life of active occupation for the good of others. It was expected of her, and habit is powerful. So she helped her mother to answer notes, and she looked out references which her father needed. She went on errands to the village and she helped Adela with her classes. It was all very prosaic, but also very soothing to her troubled mind. Mr. De Lucy and his sister were still at the vicarage, and it was curious how often she met him and how constantly they came up to the Castle. Dora was too much preoccupied to quarrel, and she was now so meek that there was no "getting a rise out of her," as De Lucy expressed it. Evidently something was very much the matter with her, and he wondered what it was that had so suddenly changed the merry girl into a thoughtful woman.

Mr. De Lucy was soon going to leave the vicarage for his usual winter tramp on the Continent, but this year he was reluctant to start. He had begun to realise too clearly that his sister invariably echoed his sentiments. She was very unlike Dora Bethune, who always gave him new ideas. What could be the matter with her?

In the meanwhile he gave her silent sympathy. He was the only one who could see that she was suffering; the others only laughed if he hinted that Dora was out of spirits.

She had been, they said, rather over-tired with nursing Forster, and the long journey had wearied her, that was all; certainly she was as active as ever, and it was such a comfort to have her at home again.

He was walking down the village street one day, hoping that he might meet her, when he was agreeably surprised by seeing the flutter of her dress down a copse walk. The postman had just gone by towards the Castle, otherwise the road was solitary.

He also turned into the copse and followed Dora, pretending to himself that this was the road he had always intended to take. Suddenly he saw the girl seated on a fallen trunk. Her lithe figure was bent forward and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

De Lucy was utterly taken off his guard. To see Dora in tears was a sight too strange to be borne with equanimity.

"Miss Dora—Miss Dora," he said, approaching her and sitting down close beside her, "what is the matter? I see you have a letter. Is anything the matter with your brother? Is he ill? Please tell me. Don't you know I—I am much distressed to see you cry."

Dora was far too wretched to mind at all what Mr. De Lucy felt, but nevertheless she was grateful for his sympathy.

She lifted her tear-stained face.

"Don't say anything about it, I mean don't say that you saw me crying. Yes, it is about Forster. Something dreadful has happened. He—he—oh! he tells me not to tell any one till to-morrow evening, but I must—I must."

"Tell me, I'm as good as no one."

"Yes—but you must promise not to say anything about it."

"Of course I won't, I'm not a——"

"Forgive me, but you don't know what it is to feel very, very miserable, and not to be able to show it. Forster says that—that he is going to Africa."

"I thought he always intended to do so."

"Yes, he meant to go some day, but he is going to-morrow, and—and without coming home first. Oh, Forster—Forster!"

"Perhaps it is because some of his scamps have got into trouble that he must go at once. It does not take long, Miss Dora, in these days to get to the Cape."

Dora stood up and looked at her companion. She did not seem to notice him, but appeared to be gazing at something before her which horrified her. There was an expression on her face which made De Lucy feel sure that she was not making too much of an imaginary evil.

"I know that one can get back easily—I know it. But—but Forster says that he will never come back, never."

"But why—why?" said De Lucy, utterly puzzled.

"I don't know—quite exactly, no—I don't know. I think that the death of Philip Winskell has—— Oh! it is dreadful."

"To-morrow! and you are not to tell!"

"No, but I must see him. Oh, you can help me if you will, Mr. De Lucy."

"Of course I will."

"Then ask me to stay at the vicarage, and I can go to Southampton to see him just once more."

"Of course I will, but——"

Poor De Lucy felt utterly nonplussed. What about propriety and a chaperon? Of course the Bethunes would not allow it. Then he rose to the occasion.

"Oh, I know; there's Mrs. Grant, our great-aunt, who is coming for the day, she can stay the night. She is a lady of seventy, but a wonderful musician, at least she used to be, and you are fond of music. I'll telegraph; let me go and arrange everything, and let me see, you must take the eight o'clock train to-morrow. Everybody will be in bed; you can go alone, and I'll meet you to-morrow and take you home. Wait here till I come back if you are not cold."

"Oh! you are good," she said, and sat down to read her letter over and over again. It was short, and told her little, but between the lines she read very much.

The little tender was just going to start to take the friends and passengers to the "Teuton," now lying some way down the river in the Southampton Water. It was her last trip, and it would bring back the friends of the travellers who had not yet left the deck. Dora had only come just in time, and she hurried forward, explaining her errand to the officials.

"All right, miss; make haste, just off." Dora stood on the little puffing steamer, but her eyes could take in none of the beauty of the scene. She had only one thought, one idea—that she must see Forster, and must know that—— She could not end the sentence.

No one greeted Dora, as she hurried on board bewildered by the busy scene. Her eye sought her brother everywhere. Oh! she had so little time; where could he be? She asked one official, who politely told her to look round for herself, the

gentleman was sure to be on deck. Dora looked round and hurried backward and forward, but she could not see him. Was it all a myth? Was his letter the result of fever? Then she went below. Here there were very few people, and passing along the narrow passage by the cabins she searched everywhere. Suddenly she saw Forster leaning over the side of the ship away from all the bustle and excitement. His back was turned to her, but with one cry of "Forster!" she was by his side, her arms were round his neck, and her tears were falling on him.

"Oh, Forster, I have found you. Come away, come back home. I have so few minutes. I thought I had missed you altogether. Tell me, what does it all mean? You will break my heart."

The tall, strong man was entirely overcome by this unexpected meeting.

"My little Dora, my little sister, you here! You—you—oh, child! you were right, you said——"

"But, Forster, never mind the past, come back home."

"Hush! listen, Dora; you know that you all believed in me, you all loved me; that must be all over, but I can't tell them so. Some day, perhaps, I shall write and explain, but not yet. You must say nothing. This is our last meeting, Dora, I will tell my mother that I have urgent business. Child, your brother is, is—— I caused Philip's death. I did it indirectly, but—it was my fault, I did it, and I am going to learn—to learn——"

He broke off, his own agony was not to be easily mastered, but Dora could not—would not understand.

"You! Oh, no, Forster! not you!"

"You remember—it was you, Dora, who said, 'Lead us not into temptation.' I went straight into it. I was not God-forsaken, but in saving me He showed me what my sin was. There is nothing but lifelong penance possible for me, and I am going to—to—see if God will forgive me, a sinner."

There was a whistle heard; it was the tender announcing its departure.

"Forster, Forster, you must not go. You —you——" But he gently released himself and almost carried her to the tender.

"Good-bye, my little Dora, my comforter. Pray for me. God will hear you."

CHAPTER LIV. REALISATION.

One morning Penelope Winskell awoke to a new existence. Since Forster's departure she had not been able to measure time. Life had seemed to be like some vast, dreary desert, devoid of land-marks, in which she was forced to walk on and on without any conscious aim or hope.

Gradually her sensations became less vague. She began to feel that there were some resting-places at which she might halt. She at last became conscious that she was weighed down by an overwhelming oppression—the oppression of a crime. The unholy thing was ever near to her, grasping her with its burning hand and repeating:

"Philip Gillbanks has been murdered by the people he saved from ruin."

At first she could only realise that his death had for ever separated her from Forster.

For her, Forster was dead. Love him as she might, nothing could recall the past; nothing could make his love live again in any form save that of remorse. Penelope had been allowed to look into a great, if an erring, man's heart, and she now knew that holiness and sin cannot live under the same roof without waging a war in which one must be the conqueror. Forster's love had brought about his ruin and Philip's death, and she had stood by and had more than consented. Then, from the contemplation of Forster's mind, she tried to look into her own. All had been vanity and sorrow; and nowhere was there any hope, nowhere any true joy. Was this the happy life, was this the expectation she had started upon so joyfully? There was no hope anywhere, and no joy. Forster had gone, and she finally realised that in time his life would reassert itself. She knew that permanent despondency was utterly foreign to his nature, even if remorse were never conquered. His life would be lived for others, and his own happiness would be merged in theirs. For Philip's sake he would persevere.

Philip! Now that he was dead, sometimes she would sit brooding long hours upon the thought of him and on Forster's love for him. This was perhaps the first thing she began fully to realise. Philip had been noble, otherwise Forster could not have loved him. If her joy had been so small, his had not been greater. She had ample time to retrace the past, and to remember—now that it could no longer anger her—his look of yearning, expectant hope. She could even recall the manly courage with which he had borne his disappointments, his determination to leave her free, and to let time bring her nearer to him.

Now that she was alone, doubly alone, she craved for sympathy; but where could she find it?

To ask her uncle for it was impossible. She must not blame him for having brought her up with only one object in view. Penelope was too noble to do this, though during this time her soul cried out from its depth of loneliness, longing for some one to take pity on her.

The servants made a circle of silence round her, wondering at the silent grief which was apparent on the face of the beautiful young widow.

She would not go out, for she dreaded remembrance, and she preferred her own chamber, where day after day she sat in front of the old embroidery frame. Except for an occasional stitch when her uncle came in, however, she did nothing. Her meals were brought to her in the adjoining room, and mechanically she ate them, refusing her uncle's company and never asking any questions.

Sometimes Betty would try to rouse her, and would tell her that she must go out or she would be ill, but Penelope did not seem to hear her; she was in truth living another life.

Philip had been murdered by her own father.

That was the refrain she heard all day. She had hardly dared to look out of her window lest she should see the King creeping along the wall, and that he should once more beckon her to come to him.

One day the Duke told her that he was trying to persuade her father to trust him with his treasure-trove, but at present unsuccessfully.

"For your sake, Penzie, I must accomplish this. Suppose you should ever marry again, it might——"

"Oh!" she said almost under her breath, rising from her seat and for the first time rousing herself. "Oh, uncle, you must not talk like that. We owe so much to the memory of Philip Gillbanks."

"Of course, of course, my dear, and your grief is most fitting, but widows are rather lonely beings. If anything were to happen to me, I should like to feel that you had a protector. As for your father——"

Penelope shuddered a little.

"He is mad. He is not answerable for his actions."

"Well, some might think so, but at times I believe that his madness has some very well-reasoned method in it. He hugs this treasure-trove because he fancies it gives him power. You would be surprised to see how strange his conduct has of late become. We cannot persuade him to come and sleep here in the Palace at night, though he will come in by day, and now not even Oldcorn is allowed to enter his burrow. He keeps it locked and double locked because he has placed half his hoard in the turret room. But strange to say Jim declares that his mind is as clear as ever about all the business of the property. Sometimes I think it would be a good thing, Penelope, if you were to try and make him give up that farm room. He really listens to you at times."

"To me, to me?"

Then it came into her mind that it was her father who had discovered her love for Forster, and perhaps it was because of that—that Philip had been murdered.

She burst into tears—the first tears the Duke had ever seen her shed, she, the proud Princess!

The realisation of this horrible thing was too great a strain upon her.

"Do you understand about Philip, uncle? He was—he was—what am I saying?"

"Come, come," said the Duke, taking his snuff-box out of his pocket. "Of course it is all very sad, but after a time—I don't say yet, not this year or next year—but after a time you must take your place in society again."

"Do you think that would drown the thought of Philip, uncle?"

Penelope had turned her back upon the Duke, and, for the first time since Forster's departure, she stood gazing out of the window and over the glen. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining over the landscape.

The Duke, looking at his niece, thought:

"It is strange, very strange, certainly. Penzie was not so much taken up with Philip whilst he lived. Indeed, I should have said——"

Aloud he answered:

"Of course, my dear, the world is a very useful institution—one knows by experience that what at first seemed impossible, after a time can become agreeable. You must try and rouse yourself, and, pardon me for saying so, Penelope, but I should advise you to take a lighter view of your grief. The human mind is not formed for solitude, nor for the too careful cherishing of sorrow."

Penelope turned round and faced her uncle, the man she had so long adored. "Shall I tell him," she thought; "what would he say?" Then the temptation,

strong as it was, was resisted. "No—no, I must bear it alone. Uncle does not, never has understood, he cannot. Only Forster knew, and he, he—— Oh, I wounded him. I seem made to hurt all those who love me; I will not spoil another life—I will not."

"I will do as you wish, uncle," she said, and she laid her head on his shoulder and cried softly. The Duke, however, preferred to see her proud and brave, for he hated tears.

"That's right. Restrain your sorrow, child, and lead a more natural life. By-and-by I will take you to town; change of scenery and of occupation will do much for you."

"But, uncle, don't you see that I must be true to Philip? You know that he loved me."

"Of course he did."

"Even for a crime he would not have forsaken me."

"For a crime?"

"He loved me in spite of—of—— do you think that, after all, it is possible that a man may be born noble?"

"There are a few accidents in nature. I quite believe Philip was one of them. I never saw him other than a gentleman and most generous."

"He was born a gentleman. If he were alive he might despise me."

"My dear child, all such metaphysical questions should be left to those who enjoy them. The true philosophy of life is how to make the best of it. You have health, wealth, beauty; there is but one thing against you—against us."

"One, one—but that is a dreadful one."

"Well, an unfortunate circumstance has deprived your father of that right judgement which is very necessary for man's happiness, and still more for the happiness of those who live with him. You alone may persuade him to give up his manias and to—to waive his right to direct his temporal affairs."

"Uncle, he hates me."

"Strong language is unbefitting. One can act without it."

"Uncle! Uncle, look," she said, seizing the Duke's arm, "there he is; I can't go to him. I—I—I think I have lost my nerve," she said, actually trembling a little.

The Duke hated emotion, but he took Penzie's hand gently in his as he looked out of the window.

"Yes, your father is going to the turret. He carries his hoards there, and I begin to fear that some accident may befall them or him. You must go to him, and try to——"

"Must I?" Penzie hid her face in her hands. "Uncle, don't you know, don't you know?" She felt that she must tell him all the truth, for the secret was too heavy for her to bear alone.

"Know what?"

Then she calmed herself; her will was shaken but it was still strong. She would spare him. His was a nature which refused to be saddened, and instinctively sought happiness. He had given her so much that for his sake she would bear this awful secret alone.

"I am very weak," she answered, raising her head; "forgive me. You used to tell me women's tears were foolish. I will go to my father and——"

"You must not mope any longer, child. You certainly must not. Could Philip know he would be the last to wish it."

"Philip!" she repeated to herself as the Duke left her. Then taking down her cloak, she thought:

"I will go to my father. He must tell me more, I must know everything. The dead are stronger than the living—oh, yes, much stronger."

Now Publishing,
THE
EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER
CONTAINING
Complete Stories by Popular Writers.
PRICE SIXPENCE.
Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 294.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSTANCE VALLOTSON stood in the middle of a little room which had once been her schoolroom. She had been at home, now, four days, and she had devoted the morning of the present day to the completion of the arrangement of her possessions in what was to be for the future her own room. The room had been done up for her reception with a conspicuously cheerful-looking paint and paper. The girl's eyes rested on the furniture which had come from her room at Girton, and which was of the severest artistic-collegiate type; they rested on the pictures on the walls, also her private property, and consisting for the most part of grim reproductions of old German pictures of the most awe-inspiring nature. Thence they wandered to the background afforded by the paint and paper, and an air of grave disapproval expressed itself in every loftily critical line of her face as she shook her head sadly.

At that moment a clock struck the half-hour. It was half-past three, and Constance started. She went across to a second door in the room which led into a bedroom, and began to make rapid preparations for going out. The clothes she took from her wardrobe were smart and pretty; and, though she dressed herself very quickly, she put on her things with a certain care and deftness which were doubtless, arguing from the expression of her face, mere concessions to the weakness of society. She had just fastened her hat at a particularly becoming angle when she heard the door of the outer room open; and, catching up her gloves and muff, she went quickly out.

"I hope I'm not late, mother!" she said. "I haven't kept you, have I? Have you come to look at my room?" she added dubiously. "How do you like it?"

Her mother had paused just within the doorway, and was looking about her with an air of tolerant neutrality. She brought her survey to a close with the girlish figure opposite her, and the neutrality faded into something which was very like indulgence.

"I've no doubt it's beautiful, child," she said tersely. "Anyhow, you can have your own way up here, as I told you. It's a nice bright paper!"

Mrs. Vallotson was very handsomely dressed for walking, in a solidly dignified style which did not rely for its effect on any adherence to the fashion of the moment; there was a presence and a stir about her which obviously arose from a sense of importance. There was to be a drawing-room meeting that afternoon in connection with one of the two or three non-local philanthropic enterprises which Alnchester honoured with its approbation and support. The particular enterprise in question was conspicuously popular in Alnchester, and Mrs. Vallotson was one of its principal promoters—the local secretary, indeed—so that her position at the forthcoming meeting would necessarily be a prominent one. Moreover, the function, which took place only once a year, was by no means limited to its business character. Business being disposed of, it became one of the chief social gatherings of the Alnchester year; just the occasion, in fact, on which to reintroduce a young woman to her fellow townspeople; and Mrs. Vallotson looked

her daughter over, now, from head to foot with critically approving eyes.

"You look very well, Connie!" she said shortly. "Where did you get that hat and jacket? In London? They are very nice! Come, we shall be late if we wait any longer."

Their destination lay at no great distance from their own house, and it was rather as a tribute to the ceremonial nature of the occasion than from any necessity of the case that they went thither in Dr. Vallotson's brougham. It was a large house standing in a considerable garden. Its owner was a native of Alnchester who had made a large fortune by means, which his fellow citizens seldom specified, connected with trade; and who had retired after a hard-working and successful career, to occupy his prosperous leisure and that of his comfortable and kind-hearted wife with benevolence and good works, both public and private.

It was about ten minutes to four—four o'clock being the hour named for the meeting—when Mrs. Vallotson and Constance entered the drawing-room; the room was filled as closely as possible with rows of chairs, by far the greater number of which were already occupied, considerably more than half these occupants being ladies. At the extreme end of the room, facing this audience, was placed a small table, behind which sat a tall, nervous-looking man—the deputation from the parent society, for whose fitting reception the assembly was convened. Grouped about this table, and also facing the room, were other chairs, evidently intended for a select few. Only three or four of these were as yet occupied; and the air of dignified reserve of those who sat in them, together with the singularly conservative nature of their garments, proclaimed them to be of the precincts.

As Mrs. Vallotson, tall, commanding, and with the air of a woman who is well aware of her own value and of the effect she is likely to produce, advanced into the room, followed by her daughter, there was an instant's partial hush in the buzz of conversation—which rose again into a very clatter of tongues as though the brief pause were something to be concealed—as the mistress of the house hastened to receive the new-comer.

"Here you are, dear Mrs. Vallotson!" she said, in a comfortable but rather agitated voice. "So very glad! Not that it's late—oh, no, of course not! Only one is always glad when you have arrived. You have such a head, you know. And Connie, too! Dear me, my love, this is very pleasant! I heard you had come home!"

"It will be a good meeting!" said Mrs. Vallotson decidedly, as she glanced about the room. "Connie, you had better go and sit there by Mrs. Norton—look, she is nodding to you. Go along!"

And as her daughter obeyed her, Mrs. Vallotson turned and followed her hostess up to the table.

"Very well she looks, to be sure!" said worthy Mrs. Grey. "And sweetly pretty, too! You must be glad to have her back, I know! Ah! Mr. Kennedy"—this to the deputation as they reached the end of the room — "let me have the pleasure of presenting you to Mrs. Vallotson, our secretary—our moving spirit, I may say!"

The Vallotsons belonged to the town; the magic line which separated the town from the precincts had never been crossed by them; on neutral ground only was there any communication. But if it had been otherwise, Mrs. Vallotson could hardly have experienced the vigorous satisfaction which pervaded her face at that moment as she took her place among the cathedral people at the table, before the whole town as it were, by right of the prominence of her position.

To judge of the proceedings that followed—when a continuous stream of arrivals had packed the room, and when the select circle of chairs about the table had received sufficiently eminent occupants—from the face which Constance Vallotson turned upon them, would have been to conclude that they represented the mole-like efforts of a race of beings absolutely different in kind from the girlish personality which was regarding them with impartial eyes. Except when her mother made a brief and decisive statement of a business character, when her critical air melted into respect, Constance sat through the meeting with a little wrinkle in her forehead which was as supercilious in its way as was the set of her lips. And it was with a sigh of unmistakeable relief that she rose in the general movement that ensued on the termination of the proceedings, and looked about her.

Her attention was instantly claimed in every direction. The position occupied in the place by her father and mother could hardly have been more clearly demonstrated than by the fact that almost every one within reach was anxious to shake hands with her, while many people in different parts

of the room were nodding friendly greetings. Constance was responding to the demands thus made upon her with calm self-assurance and self-possession, when a look and gesture from her mother, who was still standing at the upper end of the room responding to greetings and answering questions referred to her on all sides, summoned her to her side. She had obeyed the summons and had drifted with all the aristocracy of Alnchester into the tea-room, when a quick, rather boyish voice behind her said:

"I say, you've not forgotten me, have you, Constance?"

Constance was practically alone for the moment. She turned quickly. By her side, with eagerly outstretched hand, stood a slight, fair young man, with a pleasant face and a jovial twinkle in his blue eyes; and, as she saw him, a flash of genuine girlish pleasure displaced for an instant the superior indifference on Constance's face.

"Bryan!" she exclaimed. "I didn't know you were here. How do you do?"

"I've had my eye on you for ever so long," he returned cheerily. "Somebody told me you had come home, and I hoped you were sure to be here this afternoon. I'm afraid you've been rather bored, haven't you?"

His eyes were fixed upon her face, to which its normal expression had now returned, with a humorous twinkle in them which did not prevent their being slightly disturbed.

Constance responded with a condescending gesture at once of negation and scorn.

"I'm never bored," she said loftily. "I consider it weak-minded. But it has certainly been rather an exhibition. I should have thought that a man who was not obliged to come might have found something better to do with his time."

She was looking at him as she spoke with a severe expression on her features, but apparently the young man was somewhat impervious to severity, for he laughed.

"Oh, as to that," he said, "it's a good object, poor little beggars." The society had to do with the rescue of destitute children. "And as to an exhibition—well, isn't that coming it rather strong, Connie?"

The movement of the crowd had pushed them away from the centre of the room where they had met, and they had drifted until they now found themselves at the end of the room. He leaned back against the wall, crossing his legs and turning his face towards her with a certain dubious surprise dawning in them, and she returned his look with a critical glance strongly tinged with a lofty pity.

The familiarity with which they had met was founded on an intimate acquaintance which was as old as the consciousness of either. Bryan Armitage was the son of people who had been Dr. and Mrs. Vallotson's next-door neighbours for twenty years; and the intimacy between the families had been of that close nature which is the alternative in such cases to a dignified aloofness on either side, or war to the knife. Bryan was an only child. He had not been sent away from home until he was fourteen; by which time the strongest alliance, founded on much quarrelling, much frank speaking, and much mutual dependence for amusement, existed between the boy and his girl neighbour. The alliance had withstood the trial of absence, and renewed itself with every holiday time. Bryan did not go to college. At eighteen he went into a large bank, one of the features of Alnchester, the senior partner in which was a connection of his mother's. And when, a year later, both his parents died, the young man remained where circumstances had placed him, exchanging his home for lodgings in the town.

Constance answered him now without an instant's pause. Her opinions were evidently of the most distinct and uncompromising order.

"It depends upon how you see it!" she said, with decision. "It was an exhibition to me. Look at the way in which the business was done! No woman of the last generation understands business, and it's really pitiful to see them undertake it."

Bryan Armitage wrinkled up his forehead.

"I say! Pile it up!" he ejaculated audaciously. "What about Mrs. Vallotson, then, Constance? She's the exception that proves the rule, I suppose."

Connie's cheeks were just a little flushed, and her chin was elevated at a stately angle. She was not accustomed, evidently, to have her remarks received with laughter.

"My mother is a very exceptional woman," she said, with much majesty. "She is not to be classed with the ordinary women of her generation."

She paused a moment that the process of annihilation might complete itself, and then continued in a tone of condescending regret:

"But even mother, you see, is not quite exempt from the narrow prejudices which characterise the women of the past, or she

couldn't possibly give her mind to such trivialities as a society like this."

"What society, now, would you recommend as a sphere for a really large-minded and unprejudiced woman?"

Bryan Armitage's tone was gravity itself, and there was not the faintest vestige of a smile about his usually jovial face. Only in his eyes there was a suspicious twinkle. Constance did not see the twinkle; his tone was perfectly natural and satisfactory to her.

She sighed heavily.

"That is quite one of the questions of the day," she said solemnly. "And really it is rather difficult to answer it on any abstract lines. But of course with reference to Alnchester, it's easy enough; there is nothing! That is what finally determined me to come home."

He regarded her for a moment with an unmoved countenance, but still with that twinkle in his eyes. And then he said seriously:

"I'm afraid I'm very stupid—having lived in Alnchester all my life, of course I should be. But surely such a grave deficiency in the place would be rather a reason for deciding to go—somewhere else? It makes it just the last place in the world for you!"

She smiled graciously.

"Well, of course it is very nice of you to feel that," she said, "and it would be ridiculous of me to pretend that it is not true. But you see, superior women as a rule have too strong a tendency to attach themselves to spheres where the ground is already broken—where the work is obvious. Consequently I have determined to make an exception. I am going to create a sphere for myself. I am going to show what may be effected by one woman in a place like Alnchester."

The statement, uttered in a tone of lofty self-abnegation, and coming as it did from so small and so distinctly child-like a figure, was too much for Bryan Armitage's self-control. The future creator of a "sphere" was gazing majestically—metaphorically speaking, since nature's niggardliness in the matter of inches did not allow of her actual performance of the feat—over the heads of the inferior crowd to be thus benignly influenced, when she was startled back to the present by a most unseemly sound at her very elbow. Bryan Armitage was choking with suppressed laughter. She turned upon him, he caught her eye, and his laughter was suppressed no longer.

"I'm awfully sorry, Connie!" he gasped in another instant. "I say, I beg your pardon most tremendously. But it's so awfully funny to hear you talk like that! It's something so new! Look here," he added quickly and earnestly, "don't be angry with me, I'm so sorry!"

But Connie's dignity was not to be wounded with impunity. She faced him for a moment in speechless indignation, the little brown face scarlet, and her eyes flashing with a passion which seemed a trifle inconsistent with her usual superior calm.

"I consider you beneath contempt," she said briefly. And therewith she moved forward into the crowd, erect as a dart, and left him.

Half an hour later Constance, still with a slightly flushed face and with her chin somewhat aggressively raised, was walking down the drive away from the house at her mother's side. She had not deigned to bestow another word upon Bryan Armitage, though he had presented himself, protected by her mother's presence, to take leave. And it was evident that society at large was expiating his offence under the ban of her lofty disapproval.

But whatever annoyance the afternoon had brought to Constance, to her mother it had evidently been fraught with unalloyed content. All the characteristics which had marked Mrs. Vallotson's demeanour in Constance's room earlier in the afternoon; the assurance, the sense of importance, the anticipation of success; were accentuated, now that the afternoon lay behind her, tenfold; accentuated into an almost unreasoning and all-permeating dominance which is only possible, perhaps, when the mind contains some private source of satisfaction by which all external triumphs, as they blend with it, are enhanced, and through which in some mysterious way they become more keenly pleasing.

The seven o'clock dinner, which was a tradition in the Vallotson household, was not usually a conspicuously cheerful meal. To-night, however, Mrs. Vallotson came into the dining-room, where her husband and daughter, only, were waiting for her, with that glow of triumph still upon her face, and glanced towards the empty place which should have been filled by North Branston without that contraction of the brows which the sight usually evoked.

"A very good meeting!" she declared in answer to Dr. Vallotson's question, at once fussily and tentatively put. "Better than last year's, even. You ought to have

been there, Robert. You would have enjoyed it!"

Dr. Vallotson waved his hand pompously.

"No doubt! no doubt!" he said. "Unfortunately a busy man has to deny himself many such enjoyments." The area of Dr. Vallotson's business for that afternoon had been circumscribed by his study arm-chair. "You mentioned, of course, how much pleasure it would have given me to be present?"

The gesture with which Mrs. Vallotson replied put it beyond the possibility of doubt that everything demanded of her had been done and said by her in the course of the afternoon. She glanced across the table at Connie, and continued:

"Every one thought that Connie was looking well; and people were quite pleased to see her back. You had a pleasant afternoon, I'm sure, child!"

The air of supercilious toleration of the world at large, which had succeeded the haughty contempt for her fellow-creatures induced by Bryan Armitage's conduct, slipped away from Constance as she answered her mother.

"People were very kind, mother. I enjoyed it very much."

The last part of Constance's speech passed unheeded. As she spoke the door was opened with a quick, firm touch, and Mrs. Vallotson turned her head sharply as North Branston entered.

"I am late!" he said. "I am sorry, Adelaide."

The apology, so curt as to be hardly worthy the name, was uttered in a dry, indifferent tone; he passed on to his seat without another word, and Mrs. Vallotson followed him with her eyes. The air of dominance before alluded to became accentuated as the triumph in her eyes became a trifle more apparent and aggressive.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since the interview which had taken place in the drawing-room during the absence of Dr. Vallotson and his daughter, and the two who had held that interview had hardly met, as it happened—and that only for a moment in passing—since it took place.

"I thought you expected to be in time to-night, North," said Mrs. Vallotson; her tone, masterful and rebuking, carried out the suggestion of her face. "It can't always be helped, I suppose, but when it's only a question of ten minutes you might manage to be more punctual, I think."

North Branston was dining now with uninterested rapidity. He was looking, as he had looked on the previous evening, fagged and tired; but more definite than the weariness of his face was the expression of hard indifference which seemed to have grown upon him in the last twenty-four hours, until it might have stood between himself and the world in which he moved—or between two sides of his own being—like a wall. The only sign which showed that he had heard Mrs. Vallotson's speech was a slight movement of his eyebrows.

"Where have you come from?"

The question came from Dr. Vallotson; it was shortly and testily put, as if, though his professional instinct prevented his enforcing the matter of his wife's rebuke, he was more than willing to subscribe to the feeling behind it.

"Miller's Lane," returned North briefly.

"Miller's Lane!" repeated Mrs. Vallotson. "Oh, have you seen that child I told you of—Mrs. Pearson's child?" Then as North made a slight gesture of negation, she went on angrily: "Really I think you might have managed a little thing like that!"

"I saw it yesterday—there was no need to see it to-day."

"You are ready enough to make work for yourself as a rule!" said Mrs. Vallotson, with a sneer. "And that reminds me," she went on—the indulgence of her mood seemed to have strengthened it, and her voice was sharper and more directly commanding—"have you sent in your acceptance to the cottage hospital committee? I've been asked a dozen times this afternoon what you are going to do about it. It's quite time the acceptance was sent!"

She paused, demanding an answer, and as though he felt the gaze of her hard, dark eyes, North looked up and met them.

"I sent it to-day," he said grimly.

For a moment the two pair of eyes, one so full of triumph, the other so full of contempt, met and held one another in silence. Then the pause was broken in an eager, fussy tone of voice by Dr. Vallotson.

"The cottage hospital!" he said, "dear me, yes! The cottage hospital at Hatherleigh. And that reminds me—Hatherleigh reminds me, to speak more correctly—that I had a letter this afternoon—I meant to tell you of it, my dear. A very pleasant circumstance."

Mrs. Vallotson turned from North Branston with a smile—a rare thing with her—just touching her lips. She stretched out her hand carelessly as her husband spoke, and drew a dish of pears towards her.

"What is it?" she said. "Constance, why don't you have a pear?"

"It seems," continued Dr. Vallotson importantly, "that Hatherleigh Grange is taken at last."

"So I was told several times this afternoon," observed Connie. "But no one had heard who had taken it."

"You've heard, I suppose, Robert?" said Mrs. Vallotson. "Are they desirable people? Give me a steel knife, Connie. I can't peel a pear with this."

"My letter," continued Dr. Vallotson, evidently intending to make the most of his communication, "is from an old friend of mine in London—really a man who might have been supposed to have forgotten my existence, so many years it is since we met. It was extremely gratifying to me to hear from him, I can assure you!"

"And what does he say?" demanded Mrs. Vallotson.

"It seems, my dear, that the new tenant of Hatherleigh Grange, Sir William Karslake——"

There seemed to be no particular reason why Dr. Vallotson's pompous, well-pleased tones should have stopped. No one had spoken. The firm, deliberate movements with which his wife was peeling her pear had ceased suddenly; ceased with a harsh grating sound as of the knife upon the plate, and she was looking straight across the table at him. But that was all. Dr. Vallotson was vaguely surprised at himself.

"That Sir William Karslake, as I said," he continued emphatically and self-assertively, "is a patient of my friend Carson's. He is something of an invalid, and in settling in the neighbourhood applied to Carson for information as to the medical men here. Carson, of course, mentioned me. Of course in my position he could do nothing else. But he has written me a very pleasant letter on the subject, and he adds that Lady Karslake is a connection of his and that she hopes to make our acquaintance—your acquaintance, my dear, of course! Very friendly of Carson it is, very proper indeed. They will be quite an acquisition. Sir William Karslake you know, my dear; he has been a great man in India. His father was Sir Stephen Karslake, who was celebrated in connection with the Mutiny."

"And is Sir William Karslake the new tenant of Hatherleigh Grange?"

The words came from Mrs. Vallotson after a moment's dead silence in a voice so hard as to be hardly audible. As she spoke her hands began to move again, mechanically as it seemed, and she cut her pear into small pieces.

"Yes, my dear, that is exactly——"

But Dr. Vallotson's pompous tones were interrupted. North Branston had been leaning back in his chair, taking no part—taking no interest evidently—in the conversation. His gloomily downcast eyes were fixed, as it happened, on Mrs. Vallotson's plate, and as Dr. Vallotson spoke they quickened suddenly as though their inattentive vision had been attracted. He leaned a little forward, evidently hardly realising, owing to his previous inattention, that he was interrupting.

"Take care, Adelaide," he said coldly. "You've cut yourself."

A drop or two of bright red was staining Mrs. Vallotson's knife, though the movement of her fingers continued mechanically. At the sound of North Branston's voice, quiet as it was, she started; started so violently and uncontrollably that the knife, tightly gripped and wielded with a strange pressure, slipped suddenly, and the next instant the blood was pouring from a ghastly wound in her hand.

Before their horrified exclamations could break from Constance and Dr. Vallotson, North, with the readiness of his profession, had reached Mrs. Vallotson's side. Her face was ashen and drawn, and only her eyes seemed to stand out from the stupor which had crept with incredible swiftness over every feature. They stared up into North Branston's face, and she lifted her uninjured hand and pushed him feebly from her. Then her head fell back, and she fainted.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

Surely the most curious quarrel in this age of quarrels is that which the women are picking with the men. It is rather difficult, amidst the storm and the stress, to make out what is their chief cause of quarrel—they have so many causes! Through the centuries they have suffered wrong, and only wrong. It is, however, only to-day that they are beginning to find out that they have been ill-treated. The air is full of women's voices; their owners are in the forefront everywhere. Among at least the English-speaking races, it is rapidly becoming the question of the hour whether the world is to be masculine or feminine.

One notices in too many things which

women do, the touch of hysteria. Take the more or less neurotic novels which certain ladies have recently issued from English presses; in every one of them one finds a suggestion of the hysterical inclination which is an inevitable accompaniment of certain forms of anæmia. I know nothing of their authors, but I should be disposed to wager, from the evidences which peep out from between the lines, that the large majority of them are childless women. Go where you please, among the women who are shrieking out for this or for that, and you will find that seventy-five per cent. of them are, in some way or other, the victims of their sex. From the point of view of modern femininity it is woman's right to be a man. If they would only be frank, it is nature they quarrel with—they envy man!

There, to a certain extent, I, a mere man, am with them. It must be hard to be a woman. There are so many things which a man can do and a woman cannot, not because of any social ordinances, or of Mrs. Grundy, but because of her physical conformation. Within tolerably wide limits a man can be as vicious as he pleases, and nothing, physically, will happen to him. A woman begins to be vicious, and something, physically, happens to her at once. She has a curious, and it would seem, from the modern point of view, a cruel constitution. She was constructed to bear children. We are now being told that to "doom" her to bear children is to "doom" her to a life of slavery, and worse. If this view of the matter is a correct one, then, in endowing her with such a constitution, nature inflicted on her a cruel wrong; therefore, as has been said, her quarrel should be with nature, not with man. One thing is sure: she was born to pursue certain functions; if she fails to pursue them she will suffer, and those who come after her will suffer still more.

The cry of the women is for greater freedom. I, for one, do not see why they should not have it, if they choose to pay the price. Unfortunately, that is precisely what they do not choose to do. They want to have their cake, and they want to eat it. Either they must be treated as women, or they must be treated as men. It would appear that they want to be treated as both. That is absurd. If a woman tells me that she intends to fight me, at my own game, with my own weapons, then, being compelled to do so, I am prepared to fight her; but the compulsion coming from her, she must expect me to treat her as I would any other antagonist, and to take my gloves off. Either there must be a distinction between the sexes, or there must be none. Is one sex to claim the rights and appurtenances of both? In that case we certainly are getting on.

It is noticeable that the more belligerent a woman is, the more apt she is to insist on being treated with what she calls courtesy—that is, with such courtesy as shall give her a distinct advantage. The stories which reach us of the raiding by women of what are called "liquor saloons" in the United States, are remarkable for one extraordinary fact, among many. The proprietors of the saloons never seem to dare to show any signs of resenting the efforts of the women to effect their ruin. Why not? If the women were men, would not the proprietors endeavour to protect their property with tooth and with nail, with sword and with gun? Is a woman to claim the right to make of herself an obnoxious nuisance, while she denies that right to a man? It would seem so. There was an instance of a claim to something of the kind only the other day. A public meeting was being held under the auspices of a body of women who preach intemperate temperance. The licensing sessions were drawing near, and the avowed purpose of the meeting was to prevent the renewal of certain specified licenses. Some of the speakers complained very bitterly of the discourtesy of one of the publicans who was particularly interested. The man was present at the meeting—the thing, though sport to them, was death to him—and he actually dared to protest against their attempts to what he called "take away his living." No wonder the women object to the way in which they are treated.

For my part, when I read, as I am often compelled to read, "the cry of the eternal feminine," I ask myself what it is the women really want, and how they think it will benefit them when they have it. A section of them seem to be doing their best to destroy the institution of marriage—on severely moral grounds, it is true. The loftiest morality appears to be at the back of every cry just now. If marriage were abolished, or if divorce were made easier, or if the marriage tie—as a tie—were weakened, in any sort of way, probably the only person who would benefit would be the vicious man. Future generations certainly would suffer. The argument seems to be that because certain women have made

unhappy marriages, all have. M. Zola has been using the same sort of argument in France. He has been giving us certain vicious types of men and women, and only vicious types, and inferentially he would have us believe that there are no others. M. Zola is about as logical as some of our latter-day lady novelists.

Women want to be independent. Let them be. In a wide and a liberal sense independence should be regarded as the birthright of every man, and of every woman. But when some women speak of independence, they are construing that word after a fashion of their own. They want to put from them the things which we have come to regard as eminently womanly, and to take to themselves the things which we have supposed peculiarly appertain to men. Home duties, we are being told, are unworthy the attention of independent women. Their place is on the platform, and in print; in the workshops; in the hives of commerce; wherever money is to be made, and fame, or its modern equivalent, notoriety. Home duties are drudgery, a weary, ceaseless grind. For a woman to be "cribbed, cabined, and confined" within the four walls of her home is a hardship not to be endured. It may be so. All duties, patiently, persistently performed, become in time of the nature of drudgery. That is where these restless feminine spirits make so serious an error. They are apt to suppose that only one sort of work is drudgery. As a matter of fact, all sorts are. The Queen on her throne finds her work drudgery, just as much as Dick, the ploughman, finds his. As for the continual confinement of the home, of which we have heard so much, how many men who work for their daily bread are unconfined? Is the confinement of an office so much preferable to the confinement of a home?

If this feeling that women are meant for something better, nobler than home duties, increases, by whom, then, shall those duties be performed? Is our whole social state to be revolutionised? Are we English-speaking peoples to cease to have a home? Or, if we still are to have a home, what sort of home will it be? Are the successors of the lady who was interested in Borrioboola Gha to cover all the land? What an exquisite example of a happy home Mrs. Jellaby's was!

Too many women, alas! have to work if they wish to live. I doubt if any woman ought to work—for wages—outside the sphere of her own home, unless she is compelled. It is certainly more than doubtful if the present prevalent idea that young women, for instance, should, if they can, earn pocket money for themselves, is not a radically bad one. That way sweating lies! Such women can afford to work for less than their sisters who have to work to live, and they do. The result is that, because of them, the women who have to work to live starve. The present preposterously low prices which are paid for women's work are, in a great measure, owing to the fact that many of the women who take them need not work at all. Take one branch of industry alone—typewriting. When typewriting was first introduced, experts could make a decent living. Women who were in search of a little pocket money began to typewrite. Prices fell. I see advertisements regularly appear in which offers are made to copy MSS. at the rate of ninepence and tenpence a thousand. The other day I was told of a girl who, finding her dress allowance of ten pounds a year insufficient, was willing to do typewriting for me at the rate of sixpence per thousand words. As she put it, she could easily double her allowance that way anyhow. She is an exponent, it seems to me, of that sort of women's rights which insists on the rights of women to cut each other's throats.

Wherever women appear in the labour market, prices inevitably fall. A flourish of trumpets, every now and then, announces another triumph for the sex. Messrs. Cute and Sharp, the eminent bankers, we are told, intend, for the future, to employ none but women, but we are not told that they propose to pay them at least twenty-five per cent. less than they have been in the habit of paying men. Surely such triumphs are worse than disasters! Even yet the worst is not told. It is practically certain that eight out of every ten of Messrs. Cute and Sharp's new employées have no absolute necessity to work at all, while every one of the men they have supplanted has to work to live.

The reasoning which would try to persuade us that it is an advantage to any one when a woman supplants a man in any field of labour whatever, I am at a loss to understand. Do not average men work at least as much for women as for themselves — husbands, and fathers, and brothers? How does a woman propose to gain by doing her best to render it impossible for a man to work for her? Is it,

in the future, to be each for each, the man for himself, and the woman for herself; and for the children — who? Or are there to be no children in the good time coming?

It is a misfortune that any woman should be compelled to work for wages, a misfortune for herself; but many women are so compelled. Possibly, one day, women themselves will come to understand that it is something approaching to a crime for women to work for wages who are not compelled, a crime towards their struggling sisters. By all means let our girls learn how to do something to earn their living; but do not let them put their knowledge to practical use till there is a reasonable prospect of the pressure of necessity. A woman's workshop ought to be her home; she ought, first of all, to labour for those who work for her. She ought not to go needlessly out into the world to measure her strength—unfairly—with her homeless sisters.

The contests which take place between capital and labour are sufficiently bitter ones. How much more bitter would the contests be which would take place among men and women. If any large number of men were to come to look upon women—as some already look upon capital—as their natural enemies! And yet, if women persist on entering into unfair competition with men, the thing is not so unlikely as it may seem. Already ominous murmurs have been heard. Men ousted by women who are willing to accept lower wages for the same work, are not likely to be thankful. As it is, there is not work enough for all the workers. A living wage is sometimes hard to earn. If women continue to render it impossible—as they have done now in more trades than one — there will be bad blood ere long. Then we shall not hear so much of women's rights as of men's wrongs.

Of the women who figure upon various sorts of public platforms, this much may be said—one may suppose that they sometimes mean well. If they often get beyond the meaning one may venture to doubt. I have had some experience of the public platform type of women. I regret that I have had no experience of any good which they have done. One is not acquainted with much good which has been done by the public platform type of man. Who are women that they should hope to succeed where men have failed?

Probably the women who figure on platforms do so for one of three reasons—from a craving for notoriety; because they have nothing else to do; or because their own lives, as women, have been failures. The first reason, the craving for notoriety, accounts, possibly, for most of them. So many men have a desire for notoriety for notoriety's sake, that it is perhaps only natural that many women should have it too. Yet the anxiety which so many women betray to make themselves conspicuous at any cost, is not one of the pleasantest features of the time. If it is bad for a man to strain every nerve in an unceasing search for self-advertisement, surely for a woman it is worse. The man may remain manly; the woman is compelled to put what we understand by womanliness altogether behind her.

But not impossibly almost as many women enter public, or semi-public life, for the second reason as for the first. It is astonishing how many women have, or imagine they have, nothing to do. These women's lives have been failures, so it may be that the third reason should be conjoined with the second. Surely the life of no woman who has nothing to do can be called successful. It means either that she is a friendless spinster, or a childless or an unhappy wife. No happy wife and mother, in whatever station of life she may be, need ever have idle hours; she never need enter public life for sheer want of something to do.

Think of the various enterprises, philanthropic, religious, moral, social, which have been and are promoted and engineered by the public platform type of women, and name to yourself, if you can, one which has done real, permanent good—that is, something which shall be acknowledged to be real, permanent good by any but the ladies' own personal friends and admirers. I have a list of such enterprises lying in front of me. For my part I cannot put my finger upon one. No, not from the numerous Anti-Something Societies to the Zenana Mission. What is more, there is not one as to the good of whose aims, not to speak of results, there is likely to be anything approaching to general agreement. When even women get hold of a promising idea, as, for instance, the Girls' Friendly Society, they spoil it in the handling. Their friendliness is so apt to degenerate into impertinence. I remember hearing a Hindoo gentleman express his indignation at the impertinent interference of members of the Zenana Mission with his domestic arrangements. I wondered what members of that mission would say if the Hindoos

were to send emissaries—all in the cause of religion—to interfere with *them*. Should we not soon be told how "discourteous" and "intolerant" the "natives" were.

There is one aspect of the attitude which women are taking up which is generally treated humorously, but which also has its serious side—it is being rendered impossible for men to get away from them. Until recently there were certain things which a man could do, and which a woman could not; there were certain places which men frequented, and which women stayed away from. Now, whatever a man does, a woman does as a matter of course—she shoots, and cycles in breeches, and plays billiards all day long with a cigarette in her mouth. She goes everywhere; as for places of public amusement, the more risky the entertainment, the more she flocks to see it. Not only does she read everything, choosing preferentially the most suggestive fiction, she provides the public with the greater part of it herself.

I am not saying that women should or should not do these things. So far as I am concerned, I say frankly they may "go as they please." In common with other men, they have succeeded in banishing from my mind any "high falutin'" notions I entertained upon the subject of themselves. When they tell me that, in all respects, they are the equals of men—only, if anything, a trifle more so—I am prepared to admit it. Indeed, I am ready and willing to believe anything they may choose to say. It is the funny side of the situation which appeals to me. These "independent" women, these "detached" wives, these "progressive" spinsters, speak and write sometimes of men as if they were beings of an inferior order of creation. Yet wherever men are, they would, and they do, press in. They cannot leave the men alone. That war-cry of theirs, "Whatever a man can do a woman can," is pregnant with meaning of which they themselves appear to be unconscious. Whatever a man does they do—chiefly because a man is doing it. If a man did not do it, they would not do it either. They crowd the risky entertainments because the men are there. They read and write the suggestive books because their first and foremost theme is invariably the relations of the sexes. They play masculine games merely because they are masculine. In this connection I would venture on something of the nature of a prophetic utterance. It is this. If every man were to leave off playing golf to-morrow, there would not be a female golf-player left in England in a month. Heaven knows that there are a good many of them just now! Where the men lead the women follow. The "dear creatures," as the old time "bucks" used to have it, always did run after the men; it seems that just now they are running after them a little harder than ever they did. That, from the social point of view, is the Alpha and Omega of the cry of the "independent" women; that is not seldom the meaning of "Women's Rights." It is the right of a woman not to be far away from a man.

When you come to the religious, political, and moral side of the question, you will find the thing is still the same. I have again been looking down the list of the women's "societies." In the constitution of every one of them peeps out somewhere the cloven hoof of a man. Even when women ostentatiously announce that they are going to keep themselves to themselves, they cannot wholly do without him. How curiously well men can get on without women! There is this to be said: that the more men are mixed up with the women's societies, the better managed they are, and the better they seem to thrive. One "temperance society," which is supposed to consist entirely of women, and which arrogates to itself a grandiloquent title—which in itself smacks of femininity—does try to do without men as much as it can. I have followed the proceedings of that society, during the last few years, with considerable interest. Very amusing I have occasionally found them. If one were not so anxious to avoid personalities, one might give a true and a faithful account of them, which some people might mistake for an attempt at the humorous.

No doubt women have suffered wrong. No doubt the law, as it applied to them, has required mending, and, in some particulars, does require it still. No doubt women have endured things at the hands of men against which it was righteous and seemly to rebel. No doubt men have stood idly looking on at women suffering afflictions from which they should have stretched out their hands to help to free them. But the thing cuts both ways. If women have endured hardships, so have men. There is a passionate desire abroad in the world, a desire which grows and increases day by day, to remove all the hardships which press heavily upon our common humanity. Men are striving, all the world over, to alleviate the lot of men,

women, and children—of young and old. The standpoint of the women is, too often, a selfish one; they fight for their own hand—or they think they do—and their own hand only. Instead of helping it on, they are apt to obstruct the advance of general social progress. This is a day in which plain speaking, on certain subjects, is at a discount; to an extent, we have also to thank the women for that. But when we look out upon the signs of the times, and see the violent efforts which certain women are making to unsex themselves, in the most literal sense of the term, there should be no mincing of words. This is no question of ethics, it is a question of facts. Either a woman is a woman, and proves it by fulfilling the functions which she was sent into the world to fulfil, or she is what? —a nameless thing, a freak of nature.

We may be thankful that the women who are making so much hubbub; who are prating of what they call the "new morality," which is so much more hideous than the old; who are shrieking from public platforms; who are trying to hustle their way into contemporary politics—are, after all, a small minority. Though already they would seem to be making their mark on current history. It would almost appear as if Great Britain were becoming more emasculate year by year. Is that because these hybrid females, who are struggling to rule over us, are associated with emasculated men?

Still—one likes to repeat it—as yet, women of this kidney are in a small minority. There still are helpmates meet for men; women who go with us through laborious days to a restful night, and are content to do it. Women who are willing to share with us such measure of good and ill as may be meted out to us; who are willing to share our sorrows and our joys, our struggles and our triumphs. God be thanked for it!

Men are not faultless, heaven forbid that they should be. A faultless being is a monster. But some of the women who make themselves so audible examine men's faults through microscopes of such high powers that, in their eyes, they become exaggerations even of the fabulous. Women are not faultless either; we have cause to be grateful that it is so. It is bad enough that they should think themselves faultless, as apparently some of them do do. Possibly not a little of the pother arises because neither side will consent to be a little blind to the faults of the other side. A previous statement may be reiterated, that when a woman is happy with a man, she cares nothing about "women's rights." It is when a woman is without her man, or is not happy with the man she has, that the trouble begins. Happy wives and mothers know—with sure and certain reasons for their knowledge—that men are the best and truest friends women can have. It is women who, for any cause whatever, are without men, who are against men, and those women only. Whenever I read one of the novels of a certain sort, written by married women, which just now are "in demand at all the libraries," I ask myself what the trouble has been with the woman who wrote it. There has been trouble, you may be sure, matrimonial trouble, in which there have been faults upon both sides. These women are not the martyred paragons, of sound mind and of sound body, which they would have us suppose. It must be remembered that there can scarcely be a sound mind without a sound body. Anæmic women, for instance, not seldom are unfitted, both mentally and physically, to be either wives or mothers. When they discover the fact, too late, they are apt, in their bitterness, to lay the blame upon their husbands—who are, in truth, themselves the victims—and to raise a hue and cry.

The misfortune is that there are not enough men to go round; of good men, there are very far indeed from being enough. All jesting apart, the lot of the average unmarried woman, as things are, is not likely to be a happy one. It is not good for a man to live and die a bachelor, especially as age creeps on to him, and the rising generation begins to push him into corners, where he is out of the way. With the woman who lives and dies unmarried it is only too likely to be worse. It is probable that she is not greatly endowed either with riches or with beauty, or the chances are that she would change her state. For a woman to be poor, and plain, and single—do not the words suggest a tragedy? The tragedy which they suggest is too often enacted in real life. Is it strange that such women cry, with the blind leaders of the blind, with no clearer comprehension of what it is they really want than their leaders have, for "independence," for "equality of the sexes," for "women's rights"?

For my part, when I hear of a woman pushing herself into a prominent place on public platforms of any sort or kind, or asserting herself upon questions of her sex

in print, I ask myself, I wonder where the shoe is pinching her? That it is pinching her, on one of her particular private corns, I am sure. I wonder what has become of her share of masculinity, or if she is without a share? For while in France they have a proverb, "in all times of trouble," "Cherchez la femme," in England, when you come across a troubled: or, for the matter of that, a troublesome: woman—seek the man.

RHYMING WORDS.

We have about a thousand known reduplicated words in the English language, many of which are to be found in the works of our great writers; and this—albeit there seem a lack of dignity in playing upon syllables—is no matter for wonder considering the power and force of such words. Urquahart's "Rabelais" is full of them; over a hundred are included in Booth's "Analytical Dictionary," published in 1835; scores are scattered throughout the various provincial glossaries; and the Philological Society's Transactions for 1866 show a lengthy collection by Wheatley. Amongst these are counted "rhyming words," which, strange to say, are comparatively few. However, certain examples find place in love, lore, and law, and are worthy of attention; particularly the rarer forms restricted to the provinces, and such as have literary associations.

"Tirra-lirra" has a prominent place in letters. It is a well-known burden, joyous and free. "The lark that tirra-lirra chaunts," sings Autolycus; and, it may be remembered, the gentle pieman of the "Bab Ballads"—when he was not humming tra! la! la!—was singing tirer-lirer; only, being a true cockney, he makes it rhyme with dearer. But it recalls one piteous episode. When Lancelot of the Lake, blazoned, jewelled, and beautiful, flashed into the mirror of the Lady of Shalott, her heart stirred with a new passion; but—when "Tirra-lirra by the river sang Sir Lancelot"—utterly forgetting the curse, she left her place to gaze upon him; and we have read of her sorrowful ending in the Laureate's noble poem, from the cracking of the mirror to the stopping of the barge at Camelot, where Lancelot, knowing nothing of the doom his carolling had brought about, said "She has a lovely face," and besought grace for her. There is but one step to the ridiculous. It was a rhymed word that completed the captivation of Betsy Gray's admirer, and left him enthralled long after he was jilted for the chap that drove the "nuggerly donkey-cart." In the sufferer's own words:

> For she said I was a regular
> "Randy-dandy"—sort of a chap in my way,
> She broke my heart, I knew she would,
> Did Saucy Betsy Gray.

Another rhyming word is said to be borrowed from a bird's song. According to D'Urfey, in his "Pills to Purge Melancholy,"

> Whilst in eternal day; "terry-rerry," rerry, rerry,
> Hey, terry-rerry, sings the blackbird.
> Ah! what a world have they!

"Hurdum-durdum" signifies tumultuous merriment. There is a tradition that Brathwait, the author of (drunken) "Barnabee's Journal," standing upon Highgate Hill, said:

> Fare thee well, London, thou'rt good for nought else
> But hurdum, and durdum, and ringing of bells.

"Razzle-dazzle" within the present year has given title to a music-hall song; and appropriately expresses what Dick Swiveller meant when he remarked that on a previous evening he had had "the sun very strong in his eyes." In "Household Words," No. 183, "On the ran-tan" is said to mean drunk; but in Gloucestershire, "ran-tan" denotes beating, thrashing. This seems to be the more correct form, for when parties of men go stang-riding—i.e., gather round one mounted on a pole, and proceed to the house of a notorious wife-beater, they invariably commence or end their doggerel rhymes with this phrase, or a variation of it:

> With a ran-tan-tan
> This man has been licking his good woman.

We pass from this, by an easy transition, to "hickup-snickup," which forms part of a charm for the hiccough. Sir Toby Belch once exclaimed "Sneckup," a phrase which seems to have bothered annotators. As a past master in fuddling ceremonies, he probably referred to this charm, which runs:

> Hickup, snickup, stand up, straight up,
> One drop, two drops, good for the hickup.

In the south they have a very expressive phrase for one indifferently well—"Frobly-mobly"; and to be in "mubble-fubble" signifies low spirits. In Leeds when a person is overpowered with astonishment he is said to be "muck-struck," a phrase forcible but scarcely polite. "Huck-muck" is an expression of like character, meaning foul, miry; and in Devonshire a bedraggled, besmirched person is said to be "muckson up to the huckson." In Gloucestershire a wavering, unstable, or worthless man is called a "meckle-keckle fellow"; and it is worthy of remark that in Derbyshire poor

ore is called "keckle-meckle." An awkward simpleton is called a "hauvey-gauvey" in the neighbourhood of Leeds; in Warwickshire they style such a one a "hob-gob," which may be a corruption of "hobgoblin," or else it is from "hob," a lout, and "gob," a lump. "Gobbinshire" is the abode—"that never was writ in the traveller's chart"—of uncouth folk. They say of a slovenly loafer in South Cheshire:

Gobbinshire, Gobbinshire, of Gobbinshire Green,
The ronkest owd beggor as ever was seen.

A "Flibber-gibber" is a lying knave or sycophant; so, in Latimer's Sermons, fol. 39, we get: "And when these flatterers and flibber-gibbes another day shall come and claw you by the back, Your grace may answer them thus," etc. A secondary meaning of the word seems to be: a vexatious, tormenting spirit. Bishop Harsnet, in his account of the Spanish invasion, tells of forty fiends cast out by the Jesuits, among them Flibbertigibbet—doubtless another form of the original word. So the Fool in "King Lear": "This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet; he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth."

In Yarmouth, a woman in grotesque and hideous attire is said to be a Kitty Witch, or "Kitch-Witch"; and a row amongst viragoes is termed a "Kittywitch row." The origin of this word is now forgotten, even in the place. According to Forby, in his "Vocabulary of East Anglia," it was customary many years ago for women of the lowest order to go in troops from house to house to levy contributions at some seasons of the year; and on some pretence which nobody now seems to recollect, having men's shirts over their own apparel, and their faces smeared with blood.

The streets, too, give us "Hurdy-gurdy," the too well-known musical instrument. Some think this word an example of change-ringing on the Italian "ghironda"; but it is more likely derived from the simple English word "gird" and the root of "Hurdum," noise, a word previously noticed. A word of pure literary origin is "namby-pamby," signifying babyfied. It was applied by Pope and his supporters to the work of Ambrose Phillips, who addressed certain verses to Lord Carteret's children. "Namby" is generally believed to be a corruption of Ambrose, and "pamby" a reduplication of the former. "Niminy-piminy," meaning affected simplicity, a word beloved of the æsthetic Bunthorne, seems to have been put to the same use as prunes or prism was in Mrs. General's day. Lady Emily in the "Heiress" tells Miss Alscrip the way to acquire the Paphian Mimp is to stand before a glass pronouncing "nimini-pimini."

The well-known game of choosing one of two shut fists, in the hope of obtaining a marble, cherry, or such trifle, gives us a rhyming word, "Handy-dandy," which is as old as the hills. "Handy-dandy, which hand will he have?" occurs in Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," and is alluded to in "King Lear" and "Piers Plowman." Another well-known name gives us "Hen-pen." When boys attempt to dislodge, with their ducks or stones, a companion's drake or stone placed in a hole, or on an elevation, they say, "Hen-pen, duck and mallard, amen." It must be remarked that "hen-pen" in some parts means not only a house for fowls, but the dung of fowls, and also the herb yellow-rattle. In the North of England, children call certain black, greasy-looking veined pebbles, "ocker-dockers," or lucky stones, and religiously preserve them as charms.

"Pagrag" is the day when servants change their places. Thompson, in his "History and Antiquities of Boston," says it is either Mayday or Martinmas. In Holloway's "Provincial Dictionary" it is said to be old Michaelmas Day. It seems to be merely a corruption of pack-rag, i.e., a gathering together of working garments for new service; witness the old village rhyme:

Mayday, pay day,
Pack rags, and go away.

"Hitty-titty" seems to mean "touchy," and on this account may have been used as a peg on which to hang the ancient riddle—the nettle:

Hitty-titty indoors, Hitty-titty out,
If you touch Hitty-titty,
Hitty-titty will bite you.

Then there is "Hodge-podge," a mixture, and its other form "Hotch-pot" or "Hotch-potch," which has got into legal matters. Blackstone, on the authority of Littleton, writes: "It seemeth that the word hotch-pot is in English a pudding; for in a pudding is not commonly put one thing alone, but one thing with other things together"; and adds, "By this housewifely metaphor our ancestors meant to inform us that the lands, both those given in frank-marriage, and those descending in fee simple, should be mixed and blended together, and

then divided into equal portions among all the daughters . . . denoted bringing the lands into 'hotchpot.'"

"Kagmag" or "Cegmeg" is, in the Midlands, meat of poor and even bad quality; one almost scoffs in pronouncing it. "Faxwax," "packwack," "paxwax," "baxwax," "peasewease," all refer to the tough, elastic ligament running along each side of the neck of large quadrupeds. The conjurer's "Hocus-pocus" is said by some to be a perversion of the words "Hoc est Corpus," said by the priest when he consecrates the elements in the Eucharist. Others say there was a celebrated Italian magician, Ochus Bochus, whom his followers invoke. In Hudibras we get:

> But I have sent him for a token
> To your low country, Hogen Mogen.

This refers to Holland or the Netherlands, and is said to be derived from "Hoogë en Mogende"—high and mighty—the Dutch style of addressing the States-General. And now this article may be appropriately concluded in the words of "Caleb Quotem":

> With a-men, gaymen, rum quotem, factotum,
> Rhimery-chimery, liquorice-stickorice,
> Chizzle tomb, frizzle comb.

"WILL YOU WALK OUT WITH ME, MISS?"

A COMPLETE STORY.

"Mr. Walton."

"Madam."

"What is your honest opinion about love?"

"About love? Why—but you are not thinking of proposing, are you?"

"Not yet."

Then they both burst into laughter; for the young man, as he made that reference to proposing, shifted his position away from his companion with an air of alarm; the result being that the little table on which he was seated toppled over, and he unexpectedly found a seat on the grass instead.

"Miss Mulgrove," said he, when their mirth had subsided, and he was beginning to gather up the materials out of which he had been constructing a toy yacht for her small brother, "you observe that chance has supplied an appropriate answer: the very mention of love upsets me."

"But it has brought you to your knees as well."

"I beg your pardon; it is duty that has brought me to my knees, not love. I have promised Tommy that his boat shall be finished this morning, and now I can't find the rudder—bother the thing!"

"There it is!" exclaimed Tommy's sister, darting from her seat, and picking the missing article from out a long tuft of grass.

When order was restored once more, and they had resumed their tasks—he working at the little vessel with all a sailor's cunning, she making for it the sails that he had planned—there was silence between them for some minutes.

At last Walton spoke in meditative fashion, showing that his mind had been pondering her unexpected question:

"I am inclined to think that love, nowadays, is too often unreal; it has lost its simplicity and spontaneousness, because so much is made of it in fiction."

"That is exactly what I have felt myself," said Marina Mulgrove quickly. "And I think we women are chiefly to blame. We all know, in our hearts, that modern civilisation doesn't admit of much romance in real life, and yet we are not a bit satisfied unless men make love to us in a highly sentimental way. It is delightful if papa and mamma object, we get an opportunity to pose like the heroine of three volumes; and it is delightful, too, if the dear man who offers his heart and wants ours, seems in a fearful state of agony while we are thinking whether the exchange is worth making; and the worst of all is, there is no honourable retreat for either of the engaged ones, even if they find, on better acquaintance, that they don't like each other well enough to get married. No; the novelist has decided that true love is eternal, and therefore the poor wretches submit to their fate. The girl especially is afraid to return her engagement ring, because she has read so much about the frightful effect of jilting a man. He was the pink of perfection yesterday; to-morrow, if she says she has changed her mind, and does not care to get married, he begins life anew as a scoundrel, or is a hopeless drunkard in six months' time."

"When, instead of anything of the sort happening, the poor fellow would jump for joy to get his discharge," said Walton. "But that novelist has decided for him that the girl must necessarily break her heart, or end her days as a miserable spinster; so he also is afraid to speak his mind."

"And so they get married, and lead a cat and dog life," said Marina pensively.

"But how is this state of things to be altered, Miss Mulgrove? You have thought so much about the problems of modern

society. Is there any way of making marriage a safer transaction for both parties? You see, we can't abolish love, but the calamity of marriage might be — might be——"

"Avoided?" enquired Marina calmly.

There was a mocking gleam in those thoughtful grey eyes of hers as she spoke.

"No; we must recognise the inevitable, I fear; but something might be done, surely, to moderate its evils."

"Well, what should you say to a seven or ten years' lease instead of the present lifelong contract?"

"Let me see, how would that work?" said the young sailor musingly. "I marry you —don't be alarmed; the case is purely hypothetical—and at the end of seven years you have had enough of me. But although you may then be glad of your liberty, your chances in the matrimonial market cannot be, seven years hence, as good as they are now. That is a difficulty, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir; and allow me to say that your chances will not be any better than mine, if I can help it."

"Miss Mulgrove, you are feminine, and not philosophic," interrupted Walton, with severity.

"Pardon me; I am merely practical. At the end of those seven years you will certainly try to marry again; and the next lady of your choice will naturally come to me for references."

"Um—that will be awkward. A genuine widower is snapped up by the sex without enquiries—out of sheer sympathy—but this widower by arrangement must needs be armed with first class testimonials from his previous partner."

"Of course," said she with a mischievous smile.

"Still, there is this to be said; couples will have all the more reason for renewing the lease with each other, because of these unpleasant consequences we have been discussing. In fact, in the majority of cases it seems probable that the partnership would be a lifelong one, just as it is now."

"Only they would, to make that certain, always be obliged to be nice to each other," said the young lady mockingly.

"How dreadful!"

"However, there would be an entirely new theme for tea-table gossip. That would be at least one advantage of the new matrimonial method. 'Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So's lease will shortly expire. I wonder if they intend to renew? Neither of them has said a word yet. How are they behaving?'"

Evidently there were elements of strong-mindedness in Miss Mulgrove's character. But she possessed beauty and grace of behaviour to neutralise these. She passed as an "odd girl" among her female friends —none of them ever said worse than this. With men she was distinctly popular. Her personal charms no doubt partly accounted for the fact; still it was, I think, chiefly due to her ready comprehension of the masculine temperament. As her own brother said — he was a naval officer and Walton's intimate friend—"Marina makes fun enough of us poor wretches; but at the same time we are not such a blind puzzle to her as to most girls. She seems to understand by instinct what a man's notions are like, and to accommodate herself to them in what she says."

It must not be supposed, however, that Miss Mulgrove was in the habit of conversing with all her male acquaintances with just as much freedom as she did with Richard Walton. Him she had known for many years. He and the brother referred to began their naval career together. When on shore, they, as lads, were in the habit of spending part of their holidays together. And although now both of them lieutenants, and serving on different ships, it was an understood thing that friendship with their respective friends should be maintained. On the present occasion Lieutenant Walton's visit had been somewhat longer than usual; for unfortunately he had been invalided home from the Gold Coast.

But his month's stay at the Parsonage—Marina's father was rector of a small parish in a remote part of Essex, near the Laidon Hills — his month's holiday was just coming to an end. In another three days he would have to report himself to the Admiralty.

And yet I am afraid he had only recovered from one malady to become the victim of another. Gold Coast fever had been succeeded by the fever of love. Readers who are skilled in the diagnosis of the complaint, will already have discovered in his talk about love and marriage indications of his true state, a state of mild delirium, when the tongue is charged with bitterness for that and for those commonly held most dear.

Another confirmatory symptom, as it seems to me, was that the young man still clung to the theme which his companion had so oddly started; for after another

interval of silence he remarked rather soberly:

"I cannot help thinking after all the lifelong arrangement is the best one. The true difficulty lies in finding a satisfactory method of courtship."

"Can you suggest any rules and regulations?" enquired Marina, still in that calm and slightly sarcastic tone which gave no clue to her real sentiments.

"No, sailors are proverbially unskilful in navigating the ocean of love."

"Very prettily said, Mr. Walton. You certainly must be the ship's poet when at sea."

The young officer blushed. He had occasionally ventured into verse, and was wondering whether that wretched brother of hers had ever played the false friend by revealing the fact.

Possibly Miss Mulgrove observed his confusion, and sought to make atonement for causing it by being merciful to his ignorance about courtship, for she said, with a gracious smile:

"I will tell you what seems to me absolutely the best method of making love, on one condition."

"What is the condition?"

"Why, that both of us—as soon as I have enlightened you—keep absolutely silent until Tommy's boat is finished. You promised to have it ready for him by eleven, and it is now a quarter past ten."

"Agreed! Your condition is harsh but practical," said Walton, applying himself with fresh energy to his task of rigging a mainmast for the said vessel.

"Well, I got my ideal of love-making through Mrs. Simpson."

"Who is Mrs.——"

"Hush! you are not to speak, remember. Mrs. Simpson is the grocer's wife down in the village; she used to be our nurse years ago before dear mamma died, and she and I have always been great friends. One day in a frolicsome mood I enquired if Mr. Simpson was very, very nervous when he asked her to marry him—he is a dreadfully timid man, I may say. She laughed and said:

"'I don't think he ever did ask me to marry him, Miss Marina. It isn't our way. He used to tease me and I used to tease him for a long time when he came to the Parsonage for orders. Then one morning he said quite serious like: "Will you walk out with me, miss?"—it was "Polly" at other times. I said I didn't mind; so we walked out together for nearly a twelvemonth, and then began to talk about furnishing.'

"'But supposing in the meantime you had changed your minds?'

"'Well, we should have had a tiff most likely, and shouldn't have walked out together any more, that's all.'

"Now, I think," continued Miss Mulgrove, "that the unsentimental courtship of people like Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, who are a thoroughly happy pair, is vastly superior to the article supplied by the novelist. People in their station don't commit themselves too deeply before they are married, and they are generally happier afterwards"

There was a slight tremor in her voice as she concluded. Walton for his part looked grave. He had bound himself not to speak, but he was evidently dissatisfied.

It was a relief to both of them when at the end of half an hour a bright, fair-haired boy of about nine years came leaping down the steps of the terrace, under the shelter of which they were sitting. This lad was Tommy Mulgrove, commonly called by his sister Marina, "that precious mite."

"Done yet?" cried he, making a tempestuous rush at his sister, and planting himself unceremoniously by her side.

"Nearly. And what about the verb?"

"Eo, is, it, imus, itis, eunt," sang out the youngster in a confident tone, clasping Marina's arm and swinging it to the rhythm of his recital.

"Hush—h—h!"

Then Tommy gave his attention to the ship-building. The little schooner-rigged craft which was soon to be all his own, was now completed save in one respect—a name. The outline of this Lieutenant Walton was at that moment carving. As he finished, he said:

"That must do for to-day, Thomas. Letters of gold to-morrow, after the trial trip."

"Oh, but I say! that isn't fair," exclaimed the lad, in a disappointed tone, as he spelt out the name that had been carved. "Look, sis! Fancy calling my yacht 'Miss Mulgrove'! I thought it was going to be 'Richard and Marina,' for you've both helped to make it for me, haven't you now?"

The situation was a trying one for the young people. On the previous day Tommy had, in the emphatic style of small boys, declared that the yacht, then only just begun, must be called "Richard and Marina," and no objection was raised at the time. Since, however, there had been indications that Richard contemplated suggesting a much more important com-

bination of the two names. It was to prevent his designs from reaching practical shape—in plain words, to avoid a proposal—that Marina had started that conversation about love and marriage, with which the reader is already familiar. Her free-and-easy treatment of the subject made an earnest appeal such as he had determined upon quite impossible. And her last little speech contained, as he understood it, a very significant hint of her reply should he persist in disregarding the warnings of her previous remarks.

It is easy enough to say, "faint heart never won fair lady." For all that, I believe Richard Walton was acting under an impulse of manly courage in accepting his fate. He loved truly enough to see her duties as she saw them. She had the care of four motherless children, besides those numberless responsibilities of parish work which had fallen on her shoulders when the mother died eight years ago. And her father had never been himself since the shock of that dread parting. Realising all this, the young officer had, with somewhat of the hopeless loyalty of knights of old, sought in a delicate way to indicate his submission, when he carved the prosaic words "Miss Mulgrove" instead of those previously decided upon.

But he had quite forgotten, alas! that renunciation is not usually part of the creed of the British boy. Master Thomas Mulgrove had, according to his own notion, indulged in quite enough self-sacrifice already for one morning by committing to memory part of an irregular Latin verb, while the boat-building was going on. To his sturdy intellect, changing the yacht's name was simply a breach of contract; he had no feeling whatever for the sentiment conveyed thereby.

His sister had, however, and she blushed tremendously as she divined its import.

"I say, Marina," pursued that wretched youngster, "what are you colouring up for? Didn't you want it to be called 'Miss Mulgrove,' then?"

Marina had never yet boxed the ears of that "precious mite." It would have been a relief to have done so at that moment; it would have been still more a relief if she could have rushed away somewhere and had a good cry.

Walton, on his part, felt equally miserable. He wanted to say something that would ease the situation, but words utterly failed him. In the presence of that young imp, what, indeed, could the poor fellow say?

Then, suddenly, help came to these luckless victims.

"Oh! there's papa, and the lot of 'em," cried Tommy, as he caught sight of his father, his twin sisters, Ethel and Janet, and his bigger brother Jack emerging from the garden at the end of the lawn. Then he scampered away to meet them.

Marina and Richard exchanged glances for an instant. Then as by a common impulse their eyes fell. But I fear they had sealed their fates by looking into each other's eyes just then.

Richard took his knife, and without further ado began to scratch out those words from the stern of the little vessel.

"Sailors have superstitions about altering a ship's name after she is launched," said he with remarkable coolness, "so it is just as well to be on the safe side."

The "Richard and Marina" was launched that afternoon on Burnstead Lake, just half a mile from the Parsonage. Her behaviour on this trying occasion was magnificent. Tommy, as owner, was the most important personage present. More by luck than judgement he said nothing more to tempt his sister to box his ears. Why should he have done so, however? He had had his own way re "Richard and Marina."

These victims of circumstances felt rather happy as they walked home together. Richard had received a letter by the mid-day post. It was from his father—Rear-Admiral Walton, counselling him to accept the offer of a captaincy in the coast-guard service for the next five years which was placed at his disposal. Thereby further risk to his health on that fatal Gold Coast could be avoided, while promotion would not be hindered, Richard having an excellent record.

Like a sensible fellow the young officer showed this letter to the lady of his heart. As she handed it back to him he remarked gently:

"Will you walk out with me, miss?"

"Yes, Dick."

AVIGNON.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE walls of Avignon are as interesting as any part of the town. They completely girdle the place, and are practically as good as ever they were. Time has given them a certain beauty of colouring, and yet nothing is more astonishing than the grace with which they bear their age.

It was Innocent the Sixth, the fifth of the Avignon Popes, who began to fortify the place. He had good cause for the work, and—if we may credit the statement that Benedict the Twelfth, his predecessor but one, left a treasure of fourteen millions—plenty of capital also. France was in a bad way in the fourteenth century. Those famous bandits, known as "The White Company," were very much abroad. Clerics or the laity, it was all one whom they mulcted. They presented themselves, in fact, before Avignon, and his Holiness Innocent the Sixth only got rid of them by absolving them from all their sins, and giving them sixty thousand florins. It was a fine achievement for the rogues: they both ate their cake and had it.

Innocent's successor, Urban the Fifth, was stimulated to hurry on the wall building by a new troop of extortionists, the "Pilgrims of God," thirty thousand strong, under the leadership of the great Bertrand du Guesclin. These worthies demanded two hundred thousand florins from the Pope.

"Tarry," said his Holiness, "and I will raise the sum from the citizens and the people."

This gave Du Guesclin a famous opportunity to show what stuff his human nature was made of.

"Now do I see," he cried, "how full of covetousness and disloyalty is your Christianity. Avarice and pride and vanity and cruelty of all kinds abide in Holy Church... But by the faith I owe to the Holy Trinity, I will not take a single penny of the money except the Pope pays it out of his own store."

Urban the Fifth groaned, and got quit of the "pilgrims" for one hundred thousand florins out of his private treasury. Again, too, formal absolution was included in the levy.

It was clearly most essential that Avignon should have walls. The building of them, therefore, was pushed on, and we now see the result. Where they have been restored under Viollet-le-Duc's able control they look startlingly modern. But they are not like this in all their extent.

Avignon's walls are one of the sights of France. But they serve a useful as well as an antiquarian purpose. The civic customs officers have a unique cordon for their work. None but the most audacious of countrymen will attempt to force a passage into the town with his basket of eggs or butter by way of escalade—to avoid paying the tax. They are also a protection against the Rhone, which now and again floods the land, turning the old city of the Popes into an island.

From Avignon's wall, the transition is easy to the great Papal Palace—a unique building. These were times in which persons of high rank could not enjoy their dignity in houses less than ten or twelve feet thick in their exterior presentment, with narrow-barred windows, and parapeted roofs, with machicolations, and a variety of devices for annoying undesirable callers. Even the heads of the Catholic Church were not above being influenced by these temporal trifles. Hence the monstrous mass of prison-like building, with its spots of windows to its acres of sombre forbidding façade, and the towers and battlements which command the town.

Like St. Peter's of Rome, this Papal Palace of Avignon does not at first fitly hold the mind. One looks at it and looks away rather disappointed. But one looks again and again, strolls round about it and examines its parts, and ends by confessing that it fascinates. This, too, quite without thinking of its historical associations.

But the visitor does not nowadays see much of the Palace interior. Since the Revolution the Pope has had nothing to do with Avignon, and France has shown its disesteem for Popes in the abstract by turning the huge residence into a barrack.

I had to present myself at the Town Hall for an order to view such of the Palace as is still on view. Two worthy corporals represented the local "Commandant," and between them discovered the necessary permit. And then I passed through the portal of the Palace amid a crowd of the red-legged military, laughing and smoking cigarettes as they do all over France—even on the Rhine frontier—and was taken in hand by a woman.

She was not an ideal cicerone, this lady. I imagine she wished to get back to her room and finish her dinner preparations. She hurried me on when I would fain have paused awhile, and seemed more eager to crack jokes with the soldiers than rummage her mind for such details as the accomplished guide is stuffed with.

The soldiers were standing at the foot of the staircases, peeling potatoes, in groups of twenty or thirty. The atmosphere was as different as possible from what it was five centuries ago. The coarse chatter of these rustics, with the clinking of their bayonets, where soft-tongued Cardinals and courtiers trained in all the subtleties of Italian life were wont to rustle to and fro

musically or glide with the movement of serpents! Fragments of "Le Petit Journal" on the ground! And now and then the passage of a fellow in a white smock with a red joint in his arms! Singing, too, of a subdued kind; the words of the song more ribald than proper Papal ears would have approved!

However, it could not be helped; and in a way it was piquant enough to see the large chambers with their ninety-six beds apiece, and the disengaged youngsters lolling on their dark-coloured blankets, some reading their love-letters, and some rubbing at their buttons.

The place is transformed. Inside it has nothing suggestive of its old glory save a few lingering frescoes. I mounted ladders to look closely at the faces of the frescoed personages in the oratories—one the private chapel of his Holiness the Pope regnant. But there was time to do little more than recognise the hand of Florentine artists in the work.

There are dungeons and towers enough in the Palace precincts. The tower "La Glacière" saw more bloodshed during the Terror of 1791 than ever before. The tower Trouillas held Rienzi in chains for five years. Hence this notable son of a Roman publican went back to Rome, at the bidding of Innocent the Sixth, to play a new part in the city which had earlier admired him briefly as Tribune. Lord Lytton may be read for the rest of his history.

Surfeited with sightseeing, from the Palace I went in the wind to dine. They dine at noon in Avignon. The clocks were striking the hour—though there was but little of that old melody of bell-music which made Rabelais call Avignon "L'isle sonnante" at a time when there were three hundred church bells within the city walls.

I proposed to nurse the mediæval mood that had come upon me, and so I dined at the "Hôtel du Louvre," in a hall that four hundred years ago was a chapel. Pointed windows, groined and lofty ceiling, stained glass, and a religious calm—these were the characteristics of as impressive a meal as I have ever enjoyed. The waiters were tranquil men, past their prime, and with an old time civility. They whispered their communications to the dozen or so of us who sat at table; but echo seized upon their voices, and so we ate in the midst of a dying murmur of sound, as if the ghosts of the priests who ministered here in the time of Henry the Fourth were still chanting a ghostly mass. A portrait of Napoleon occupied the high west wall of the chamber. It seemed a little out of place, but it is not for a stranger to judge in such matters. As for the dinner, it was excellent, though it did include among its courses such doubtful luxuries as cockles in their shells. I liked nothing about it better than the soft harmonious voices of the waiters. They had the tongues of men of Provence—who clip their words cruelly yet with grace. As, for example, when I asked at what hour was the table d'hôte:

"À l'or qu' vo' voy', m'sieur," came the reply. It was a melodious riddle at first, but the meaning trilled itself home to me.

Dinner over, I smoked my cigar in another café, while I gazed upon Avignon's modern civic and other buildings and the statues that have come upon the town since it passed from the Popes to France. There is a monstrous marble group in the Town Hall Square, commemorating those of the district who died in the Franco-German War. The theatre, too, commands attention alongside the grandiose Town Hall, with its portico steeped in classicality.

Then I rambled between the showers into some of Avignon's back streets, noting on the way the "Salon Petrarque," for hair-cutting and "schampooing Americaine." I do not like these back streets of Avignon. They contain disestablished palaces enough—they would be called palaces in Italy—and some rather nice old curiosity shops crowded with dusty articles of the time of Rienzi; and they give one some strong contrasts, as, for example, where the bush of a wine shop swings below the statue of a Virgin and Child. But they are cobbled to distraction, and after rain the cobbles are glacial in their slipperiness, and they smell—like the meanest quarters in the dirtiest city of the dirtiest part of Europe. Once, too, a lady emptied a basin into the street from above, the fourth floor, just when I was conveniently placed for the infliction; and, moreover, though the town is not a large one, these slums ramify astonishingly. I lost my way in them and proved more bad smells in half an hour—so soon after dinner, too!—than ever, I think, before.

But at the Place Pie I got a clue for my salvation. That, at any rate, was done large on my map, however impossible it was to identify the various alleys and passages and streetlets which brought me to it. I came upon it through Avignon's market, where a host of old ladies in snow-white caps—which went well with their chestnut-

coloured complexions—were sitting in state among gory sheep's heads and the like edible decorations. Signs of Avignon's old ecclesiastical greatness abound hereabouts: church porches leading into warehouses instead of incensed naves, and with the noise of handicraftsmen where in Petrarch's time mass was sung daily with conventional pomp.

The Place Pie gives us another morsel of Avignon's romance. Here, more than three hundred years ago, lived one Perrinet Parpaille, president of the town's university. The poor man had the personal misfortune to be bitten by the mania for Protestantism. He became a thoroughpaced reformer in religion, headed the Calvinists of Provence, plundered the churches of the town of Orange, and prepared for a tooth-and-nail struggle against Catholicism. But he came to grief in due time, and, having first been exposed in a wooden cage for several days, the populace jeering him, he had his head cut off in one of the Palace courts. His house was then razed to the ground, and the Place Pie reigns in its stead.

Among Avignon's disestablished churches that of St. Antony, now an iron warehouse, deserves to be mentioned for the sake of Mary of Scotland's gracious treatment of a certain Archdeacon of Paris, named Chartier, who was buried here. His reverence was extremely ugly, but also a marvellous poet, orator, and rhetorician. One day Queen Mary passed him when he was asleep and kissed his lips, "for the sake of the fine things," she said, "which his mouth was wont to utter."

A continuance of the rain of this dismal day drove me for shelter into the church of St. Agricole—the edifice which in 1793 was turned into Avignon's Temple of Reason. I was just in time for the funeral of an artisan. The mortuary car rattled up to the porch, there was a stampede of the mourners with their dripping umbrellas—which they immediately exchanged for lighted candles—and the priest began to cense us one and all. It was not a very edifying service; the poor fellow who was dead inspired no tears. His followers chatted, and smiled, and held their tapers awry so that the grease dropped on to the pavement, and the common coffin of white unpolished wood looked as bleak and depressing as the threadbare pall which had been laid on one side by the undertaker. Flowers there were none for the dead in this land of flowers, though some of tissue paper were to be seen on the church's altar. It was a relief when the priest gave the benediction, and blew his nose in a business-like manner, as if publicly to advertise his gladness in the end of the ceremony. "My friend the corpse" was then trotted off to the hearse, and so to the cemetery, whither the mourners declined to follow it.

These churches of Avignon scarcely do themselves justice. They mostly date from a notable epoch in the history of Gothic architecture, but subsequent generations have played havoc with their original beauty. They are either built round closely with mean shops or residences, or the marbles and pictures of their interior are lost sight of in the more tawdry additions of modern times.

Talking of pictures, there was anciently one here in Avignon, in the Convent of the Célestins, which surely "licked creation" in the matter of ghastliness. It was the work of King René of Anjou and Provence, and its subject was his dead mistress. He had loved this woman exceedingly, and he chose to have her grave opened several days after her burial that he might once again feast his eyes upon her. The sight he then saw seems to have turned him suddenly melancholy-mad. At any rate, he determined to paint the dead woman, and paint her he did; the coffin resting, opened, against a graveyard cross, the corpse half shrouded, and teeming with worms, and veiled in part by spiders' webs. This precious work of art existed in the eighteenth century. We may rejoice that it has not come down to our time to be photographed and sold in copies at half-a-franc throughout the length and breadth of France.

But enough of Avignon's churches. The old town has more than it knows what to do with, in the present dwindled state of its population.

Towards evening I wearied of sightseeing, and, having supped, went to the theatre. It may be heresy to say it, but I prefer Avignon's theatre to all its churches put together. This at any rate pulses with modern life, which is, after all, the kind of life that best befits us moderns.

The odious mistral abated somewhat towards midnight, and the moon broke through the clouds, which, however, still ran dark and fast before the upper breezes.

"I fear monsieur deceives himself!" a courteous native of the town replied to me when I ventured in conversation to express my joy that the wind had fallen. "It is the rule for the mistral to have a three days' spell. Afterwards it will be fine weather."

Good heavens! what a prospect, methought! But alas! when I awoke the next morning, and drew aside the dingy, crimson curtains of my funereal bed, it was to see a rain-blurred window, and no shred of blue sky anywhere. The old sights repeated themselves: bending trees, close-cloaked citizens, umbrellas, a glistening thoroughfare, and gutters looking as if they would fain emulate the Rhone herself.

My hotel waiter confirmed the words of the other native of Avignon. He hadn't a doubt it would be as cheerful a day as its predecessor.

I have seldom suffered so depressing a disappointment as this weather treatment in a place where I had confidently looked for blue skies. Daudet's picture of Avignon, as his vigorous imagination recomposed it, is the very antithesis of Avignon as I saw it. "Streets carpeted with flowers" indeed, banners flying before the breeze, tapestried windows, soldiers singing Latin songs, red-capped cardinals going hither and thither in brilliant processions, the sweet medley of lutes and mandolines and musical church bells, and a populace dancing to the sound of fifes and tambourines on Bénézet's admirable bridge—this is the Avignon the novelist describes in his "Letters from my Mill."

My Avignon, on the other hand, has already been limned as a flat, stale, and—historical associations apart—unprofitable country town, where they ape Parisian manners and enjoy as serials to their journals such literary food as "The Nights of Paris!"

I am truly sorry I have been forced to carry away with me such an impression as I have of Avignon. It was bad enough to go from palace to church, and from bridge to convent, buffeted by the wind and the rain. But it seemed even worse that I should have to pay my respects to Vaucluse itself in the midst of a downpour that threatened to float my vehicle on the Vaucluse highway ere I could get back to Avignon's protecting walls. However, the fancy has wings, and can now and then close the flood-gates of reality upon its dreams of the past. And so, in spite of the mistral, I understood something of Petrarch's pleasure in this sequestered spot. But I returned to Avignon very damp, and sighed for the charms of the weather in old England.

And so the next morning I rose at the dreadful hour of five—the mistral still on—and entered the express for Paris.

I had suggested to my landlord at the Hôtel Crillon that a cup of coffee before leaving him would be an appreciated kindness. But the honest man evaded the suggestion.

"In the weather that is, monsieur, only the porter will have arisen at the hour necessary for monsieur. He will be unable to prepare coffee, but he shall attend to monsieur's luggage."

Some time I must revisit this city of the Popes. I owe it to Avignon itself to expunge the dolorous memory of it which I, at present, have perforce to entertain.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LV. FIRE AND SMOKE.

WHERE was her father? She had certainly seen him coming towards the Palace, perhaps she would find him there fingering his gold. Her uncle wanted her to get it away from him, but as for herself, she now only longed—by a strange perversity of human nature—to know more about Philip's death. She felt she must talk about it to some one, and she could only talk to the man who had done the deed. The secret was too heavy, too dreadful for her to carry alone.

After Forster's departure she had waited and longed intensely for a word from him. He would surely relent and send her a line, wherein she would find his love hidden. But nothing had come, not one line, not one message, and now she realised that she would never again see him or hear from him. That was all over, that one love of her life; that one strange episode was dead, and it had died surrounded by horror and sin.

After that awakening, the thought of Philip had more and more intruded itself upon her. He would never have left her, she was sure of it; but then all thought ended in this terrible fact—Philip had been murdered here, in the Rothery glen, where he had first come to crave for hospitality.

Sometimes she felt that she could not bear the thought, so she would pace up and down the room trying to forget it. At these times Philip's voice seemed to sound close to her, pleading for her love, or at least for her kindness.

"If he were here, if he were here, I—I—would try to live my life differently," she thought, "but he is not here."

The last conversation with the Duke had at length roused her into action. She would go to her father and compel him to listen to her. She would try to show him how his evil had wrought, and that—but then she mentally shrank from his coarse words, "Go to your lover," though now they were no longer applicable.

She opened her door and listened to the silence. Silence frightened her now as it had never frightened her before. Her nerves must be giving way, she thought.

Her father must be in the turret-room, for though he would not sleep there, he often sat in the lower room when it was dark, so Jim Oldcorn said. This would be the first time she had seen him since his announcement at the farm, and the thought of him brought back all her misery. Still the exertion did her good, and she determined to proceed. She would hear it again, she would know all there was to know about Philip.

She went down the stairs, now silent and deserted, into the hall. The servants, left so much to their own devices, neglected their duties, and there was no light in the great central hall, nothing but gloom and silence. A smell of damp had crept in from the outside, and everything was now suggestive of death and decay.

Penelope paused again and again. Her heart beat fast. She was afraid—actually afraid, and her fear seemed to take shape in a dread of seeing Philip. Were there such things as visible ghosts? Would Philip's sad spirit come to reproach her? If there were any truth in apparitions—and the ghost of her ancestress was an undisputed belief in the family—then surely his spirit might well wish to reproach her. She must go on, however, so she turned down the passage leading to the dilapidated turret. It seemed to her long ago since Philip had followed her down this same place, and since she had showed him the old family treasures—the locket and chain which was supposed to bring sorrow if it were given away, and the sword of David Winskell. As she walked slowly on, suddenly she heard the old sound of footsteps behind her. They had ceased for some time, and the fact of hearing them again gave her a start of pleasure.

More bravely now she continued her journey. She knew her way too well to need light, but, as she approached the heavy door which separated the turret from the main buildings, she wondered how she would be able to make her father understand that she must see him. The swing door was fortunately not bolted from the inside, as was often the case, and as she let it close behind her she shivered a little. Damp and decay were only too visible here, and everything spoke of ruin. It was even dangerous, she had heard her uncle say, and even a casual observer could see the truth of this. She noticed that the beam above the heavy door of her father's room was barely safe. There might soon be a sudden fall of masonry, for an ominous crack ran upwards into the gloom.

She listened in some trepidation. A faint light came from under the door, and she heard a movement within as she repeated her knocks.

"Let me in," she said as firmly as she could.

There was no answer, and Penelope waited some time before she repeated her request. Some muttered curses was the only response she could distinguish, but still she stood her ground.

"I must come in, father."

Presently she heard him approach the door, and in another moment he drew back a heavy bolt.

They were too much accustomed to the strange contrast they presented to be struck by it, but Penelope for the first time felt a strong loathing towards this man who had brought so much evil upon her.

"My uncle sent me," she said, entering the room, which was in a filthy condition, the King having lately allowed no one to enter it. A large fire was burning on the hearth, lighting up, all too well, the comfortless state of the room.

"What does Greybarrow want? He has plagued me enough I won't let him have my money. Let him find some for himself; and he may go to the devil if it pleases him!"

Penelope interposed.

"However much you may value your hoarded gold, you are not the owner of this place. It would have been sold over our heads but for—for—the man you—you——"

A gleam of fierce, mad hatred transformed the King's face into something diabolical.

"You need not fear," continued Penelope, "I have said nothing but to one person. The man whose life you have ruined."

"Me! me! and what about you, girl? Where is the lover, eh? Why doesn't he stay and——"

"Hush! he is gone for ever. You have ruined all our lives."

The King laughed; a laugh that was painful to hear.

"So the King of Rothery can do something, eh, girl? Get along with you. Go. No, stay a moment. Look, Princess, do you see this panel? The gold is here now. I have moved it here to-day. If Greybarrow wants it, don't let him have it. I shall pay it back pound for pound to—to——"

"You cannot, you cannot do it now. Why was I ever born? Why was this wretched pride fostered, only to end in—in murder?"

The King burst into one of his uncontrollable fits of laughter, and Penelope, too angry to answer, moved away.

"Stop!" he cried, "stop, girl; don't tell Greybarrow, or he would seize it, he would gamble it away. The devil take——"

But Penelope had already closed the door, and behind her she seemed to hear the mad laughter of her father following her down the haunted passage. She even heard him draw the bolt again as his laughter mingled with his cry of "The devil take you!"

When Penelope found herself once more in her room, she felt quite overcome with fear and misery. Betty was waiting for her, wondering where she had gone, but even to Betty the Princess could not reveal her father's condition. Most likely she knew it from Jim Oldcorn, but the family pride was too great to ask for sympathy, even from an old retainer.

"You must eat, Miss Penelope," urged Betty; "you do look like a ghost, that's sure."

"Tell the Duke I will not come downstairs this evening. I will go to bed. I don't wish to see any one. Don't ask me any questions, Betty."

"Poor love! Poor love! This has all come of going to London, Miss Penelope. It is all along of that. Didn't I say there would no good come of it? It's a wicked place, and Jim Oldcorn says he'll never set foot there not as long as he lives."

"I should like to be there now, anywhere, anywhere away from here," said Penelope wearily.

"Good Lord, Miss Penelope, how the times is changed, you speaking against the Rothery valley! Well, to be sure, times is changed."

Then Penelope, weary and hopeless, retired early to bed, and for the first time since Forster's departure she fell into a sound sleep. It was a disturbed sleep, certainly, and for some time she was troubled with wild dreams, in which she seemed to hear her father's mad laughter. But after a time these dreams changed, and she saw before her the form of Philip, but so changed, so sad, that she cried out in fear. Her very soul seemed frozen with the agony of the sight, and with the look of reproach in his eyes. Indeed, so vivid was this dream, that at last the strength of her fear awakened her, and she started up with a cry on her lips: "Philip! Philip!"

In a second she began to realise that she had only been dreaming, but even then the dream seemed more like a vision which must be true, than a mere picture of the imagination.

She stretched out her arms, as if she could by so doing thrust aside the impression which had so much pained her. It was there close to her. Philip was there with his kind, reproachful face, gazing so inexpressibly sadly at her, that though now fully awake, she called out aloud:

"Oh, go away! Go away!"

The moonlight came slowly flickering round about, and she saw that it was her own garments on a great arm-chair which had taken the shape of the dead man. It had all been imaginary, a phantom of the mind, but as she hastily threw on her dressing-gown her hands still trembled from the fear she had experienced. Surely spirit had called to spirit, for never before had she felt like this; it was a dream that had the force of a vision, and which thrilled her with dread.

There seemed to be no air in the room, though every now and then she could hear a gust of wind sweeping across the courtyard on its way to the lake, where it would gather strength round the base of the lonely hills and raise the water into miniature waves.

But the spiritual presence was still there, and, hurrying across to the window, she hastily opened it. The fresh cold air revived her, and for one moment she felt that she could breathe more freely. Then, lifting her eyes towards the cloud-swept heavens, she wondered how she would in future escape from such moments. She could not bear them; if they returned often a new misery would be added to her life, a new torture of which she had no previous experience. She leant her head against the casement, and wearily closed her eyes. When she opened them again she was roused by seeing a strange thin cloud of blackness sweeping across the yard. It seemed as if the clouds she had lately seen traversing the path of the moon had descended upon

earth, but the next moment Penelope's heart seemed to stand still, for, looking sideways to where the sky was shut out by the high turret, she saw whence came the cloud. It was smoke, and the turret must be on fire. Some of the smoke silently ascended in thin wreaths; some, wind-blown, was carried past her windows to journey on no one knew whither. The truth was at once clear for her.

Fire! The turret was on fire, and she had left her father there.

The Winskells were brave by nature, and danger had a specially bracing effect upon their nerves. A moment before the Princess had felt crushed and weak, now she did not hesitate for a moment. She hurried on her clothes with incredible speed, and then, wrapping her black fur cloak around her, she opened the door and ran down stairs.

Her uncle's room was some way distant; should she go first to him or first to the turret? For an instant she hesitated, then a terrible fear swept over her. Her father had bolted the door after her. Suppose he himself had stayed in the room, and suppose he were unable to get out! She must go first to him; so on she ran, down the steps and into the great hall, too anxious to call out, and with but one idea in her mind: the turret was on fire, and her father was there. As she passed down the passage she remembered that there was a bell close by, and she pulled it violently; then on she flew, and pushing open the great swing door, she suddenly found herself enveloped in smoke. It was true; the fire must be within the room where her father had so lately been seen. She rushed across the smoke-filled passage, and seized the door-handle. The door resisted; it was still bolted from within.

Now she called out aloud: "Father, father!" She placed her eye to the lock, fancying she heard the King's voice, but she could not be sure of this, so without pausing another moment she rushed away, calling out with all her strength:

"Fire! fire!"

Before she got to the end of the passage she met the butler, then Betty, and soon after the Duke himself hastened towards her. He had smelt the smoke and had also been roused by the bell.

"Come, help; fetch some tools. The door of the turret is bolted. He—the King—was there last night; he must be there still."

"Impossible! He never sleeps there," said the Duke. "Where is Oldcorn? Send some one for him."

The smoke drove them back several times. Then there came a sudden change of the wind, and the black pillar rolled off in another direction, so that it was just possible for the men to begin the work of battering in the door. That was the only way possible, and the heavy blows fell thick and fast, rousing strange hollow echoes along the stone passages. When Oldcorn and some more of the shepherds came running up, the less stalwart made room for them.

"Look! look!" cried Betty, opening the small door which led into the courtyard, "the fire has run up to the second floor; certain sure it will reach the roof of the turret."

"From whence it may run across to the new building," said the Duke, horror-struck. "Come, my men, make haste; we must force an entrance. Williams, ring the great bell which calls up the village folk; they will make a chain to the Rothery. If this turret alone is doomed, there will be no great harm done; but it will be a race with the fire."

Now Publishing,
THE
EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER
CONTAINING
Complete Stories by Popular Writers.
PRICE SIXPENCE.
Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 295.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

"ONE can't have everything, I suppose! We feel a little dubious on certain points, but if the case had been different we should only have felt a little dubious on certain other points, I take it."

"Whether the points in question now are not rather important—eh, Masters? Seems so to me, you know!"

The two speeches; the one slow and ponderous, as of a man who feels his words to carry weight, the other nervous and tentative, as of a meek man; possessed, for all their difference, one characteristic in common—a species of ruminating dissatisfaction. And, as the last speaker paused, he glanced round him, as though vaguely conscious that the sense of the meeting was with him.

The meeting consisted of a group of men which would have struck awe into the breast of any average inhabitant of Alnchester, though it could hardly be said to be intrinsically awe-inspiring in appearance. It was composed of about a dozen of the most prominent men, alike of the precincts and the town, who sat shoulder to shoulder, oblivious of the yawning gulf between them. The first speaker: a large, slow man with sandy hair and beard: Mr. Masters, the Mayor of Alnchester, sat at one end of the table; and the man who had answered him was one of the principal tradesmen of the town—a very wealthy grocer. At the other end of the table, acting as chairman, was the Dean. The rest of the meeting consisted of several of the canons; young Mr. Eliot, the banker's son; the leading solicitor of the place; and old Dr. Rivers, who was Dr. Vallotson's friendly rival. There was an empty place next Dr. Rivers which Dr. Vallotson should have filled, and there was also an empty chair at the chairman's right hand.

The room was one in the town hall used for committee meetings and so forth, and the group assembled represented the committee formed for the establishment of a cottage hospital for children; it was, for the moment, Alnchester's special hobby, and was to be located at Hatherleigh, a village about three miles from the town. The business of the meeting had not, however, begun as yet. It was evidently waiting the arrival of something or some one; and as evidently the members of the committee were occupied in tentatively carping and disparaging comment.

"A rather more sympathetic man would have been better, no doubt!" observed one of the canons regretfully, in response to the last speaker's tacit appeal. "But Dr. Branston's skill is very valuable."

"Oh, there's no doubt about his brains! He's a clever fellow enough—if only he didn't take such care to let you know it!"

The words came from young Mr. Eliot, and the disparaging testimony to North Branston's powers was uttered with a rather bitter sneer. The word was taken up by Mr. Masters.

"The long and short of it is," he observed sententiously, "that we had no choice, and we must just make the best of things as they are. We cannot approve entirely of Dr. Branston, and that is the fact. We don't like free-thinking in Alnchester, and a man who is never seen inside a place of worship mustn't look to stand well among us. But failing Dr. Rivers and Dr.

Vallotson, Dr. Branston is evidently the man for this particular post, and no doubt in many ways he'll fill it very well."

"I endorse that sentiment very heartily, Mr. Masters. I consider that we are fortunate—exceptionally fortunate, I may say—in having so valuable a brain as North Branston's at our service. And for the rest—well, gentlemen, as we are talking quite informally, perhaps it will not be taken amiss if I suggest that the subject of our discussion is hardly justly appreciated."

The speaker was a tall, thin, grey-haired man who sat at the Dean's left hand—Archdeacon French by name, one of the canons of Alnchester. His face, lined and worn into a suggestion of considerably greater age than was implied in the colour of his hair, was very delicately and strongly cut, and was conspicuously noticeable for a certain expression of quiet observance which characterised it. His voice was at once firm and gentle, and the tone of his last words, which was that of delicate suggestion rather than of assertion or reproof, was particularly attractive. He was listened to with a deference which showed that he was a personage in Alnchester. But the deference was tinged in almost every face with dissent more or less open, and his words were succeeded by a silence.

The silence was broken by a quick step in the passage outside; the door opened, and North Branston came in.

"I am afraid I am behind time, gentlemen," he said. "I beg to apologise."

The faces of the committee, one and all of which had turned towards the door as it opened, were rather a curious study. Each had changed slightly; each had developed, in place of the previous more or less pronounced dissatisfaction, a certain reserve; a reserve which was in some cases merely non-committal, while in others it accentuated itself into suspicion or distrust, or even positive dislike. Obviously, Alnchester had not bestowed upon North Branston, as a resident, that goodwill which it had withheld from him as an occasional visitor.

Nor was the fact wholly surprising, if taken in conjunction with North's expression and demeanour at the present moment; though perhaps cause and effect were capable of transposition. He had spoken briefly, and now, as he walked up the room in response to the Dean's invitation to the chair at his right hand, there was an indifferent composure about him which was neither conciliatory nor deferential. His deep-set eyes were more contemptuous than usual as he surveyed the meeting, and the cynical set of his lips more pronounced.

"My first and most pleasant duty," began the Dean, after having formally opened the meeting, "is to express our great pleasure, Dr. Branston, at your acceptance of the post of visiting physician to the proposed hospital. I feel that I am expressing the feeling of the committee when I say that we are highly sensible of the sacrifice involved to so busy a man as yourself, and that we are fully conscious that the position could not be more adequately filled."

The formal speech was spoken with stately propriety; the words expressed no more than the Dean's honest opinion on the matter; but there were reserves in his mind with reference to North Branston, and there was no geniality about the tone. His words were followed by a murmur of assent, civil but not hearty. Only Archdeacon French's "Quite so! Quite so!" rang out pleasantly.

"You are very good!" said North. "I consider myself honoured by the appointment!" His dry voice took a slightly ironical tone, and young Mr. Eliot leaned suddenly back in his chair. "As my time is, as you say, somewhat limited, may I suggest that the necessary business should be transacted without delay?"

It was not precisely a harmonious hour that followed, though the disturbing element never rose to the surface. Between the tendency of the committee to carp openly or covertly at Dr. Branston's statements and proposals; and Dr. Branston's dry and scathing disposal of unfeasible alternatives and irrelevant discussion; between the necessity for dealing judiciously alike with the grocer's sour distrust of the new-comer, the disposition of some of the canons to maunder benevolently on the subject of sick children in the abstract, and the unconcealed hostility to North which young Mr. Eliot took less and less pains to control; the Dean's position as chairman was far from a sinecure. By the time the hour was over, North Branston's face was darker and more grim than usual; and when the meeting was finally adjourned, he parted from his colleagues with a curt and comprehensive "Good day, gentlemen!"

He was striding towards the door alone, leaving the committee in confidential groups about the room, when Archdeacon French, who had ably seconded the Dean in the steering of his difficult course, disengaged himself from the group to which he belonged, and followed him to the door.

"Good-bye, Branston!" he said, holding out a cordial hand and looking pleasantly into the younger man's face. "By-the-bye, can you come and dine with me one night this week—just ourselves, you know? The day after to-morrow, shall we say? Good!"

He shook hands heartily, and North went on his way.

It was nearly one o'clock, and his way lay homeward. His face had not relaxed from the set which it had brought from the committee room, when as he had cleared the town and was beginning to breast the hill, he heard quick steps behind him, and a voice calling his name:

"Branston! I say, what a pace!"

It was Bryan Armitage, and as he reached North's side he went on cheerily:

"I've been dashing after you all through the town. I'm going up your way—supposing you were going home—and I thought we might as well walk up together. It'll train me a bit!" he added, with a laugh.

"All right!" was the terse assent. And North Branston resumed a modified edition of his long stride.

Bryan Armitage glanced up at his face with a quick look of perception in his blue eyes.

"You've been to the hospital committee meeting, haven't you?" he said. "I say, North, can you tell me how it is that when all our Alnchester bosses are such first-rate fellows if you take them individually, they should become such a lot of funny old potterers when you get 'em in committee?"

He paused; looking up with his eyes twinkling; and North, compelled to an answer apparently by his silence, shook his head.

"I can't tell you," he said grimly.

"But you're not prepared to deny the fact, anyhow? I say, North, having just seen them at it! No, I thought not!" He laughed jollily, and then stopped rather suddenly. "It's an awfully fine thing that you've taken the business up, North," he said, and the face which he turned to North was eloquent in every line with boyish admiration. "I'm no end glad!"

The tribute was accepted with a gesture only, but Bryan Armitage appeared unconscious of any ungraciousness.

"I hope no end it will work," he went on. "It'll be a jolly time for the little kids, won't it?"

This very simple edition of the elaborate platitudes delivered by sundry members of the committee was not snubbed by North Branston. They had come to a fork in the road, and Bryan had stopped, indicating that his way was no longer North's. In the boy's face was an enthusiastic hero-worship; in the man's an odd tolerance and a half-forced envy.

"I hope the kids will appreciate it," he said, with a smile. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye," returned the other. "Oh, I say, North, by-the-bye, how's Connie?"

North paused as if the question came upon him as rather irrelevant.

"She's all right, I believe," he said. "You've seen her since she came home, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes," was the rapid and rather airy answer. "I've seen her all right. A week ago, at the meeting. She's rather altered, isn't she?"

He did not wait for an answer, but walked off rapidly with a wave of his hand.

Another five minutes brought North to Dr. Vallotson's house. He opened the door and was walking quickly towards his own room, when the drawing-room door opened and Constance came towards him.

"Wait a moment, North," she said. Constance had never been taught to address North Branston as "uncle." "Mother's hand is very painful. She has not said so, of course, but one can see that she is in pain. It ought to be seen to, I'm sure."

"Is Dr. Vallotson out?" demanded North. "He looked at it this morning, I suppose?"

"I don't know when he will be in," returned the girl loftily, looking at him with hard, condemning young eyes, "or I should not have asked you to see to it. But I'm sure the bandages are too tight or something."

"Where is she?"

"In the drawing-room, writing letters." And without deigning to express her sense of his reluctance by another word, Constance passed him and went upstairs.

With an extra fold in his forehead and compressed lips North Branston strode on and went into the drawing-room.

"Constance tells me your hand is worse, Adelaide," he said abruptly.

Mrs. Vallotson was sitting at her writing-table with her back to the door. In spite of Constance's words, however, she was not writing at the moment; her pen lay idle on the blotting-paper, and she was sitting almost rigidly erect, looking straight before her. Presumably she was pausing for consideration between two letters. Presumably also her thoughts had been somewhat in-

tent, and had prevented her hearing the door open, for at the first sound of North Branston's voice she started violently, almost convulsively, but without turning round. A second or two elapsed, during which he waited for an answer, and then she moved her head slowly and looked towards him.

The wound in Mrs. Vallotson's hand, though it was unpleasant enough, had not at first seemed to her husband likely to be a long affair in healing, taking into consideration her robust frame. But the week that had since elapsed had falsified these first impressions. Not only had the shock and the loss of blood told on her extraordinarily, unhinging her nerves and producing a strange state of fever, but the wound itself had inflamed, and even now showed little sign of healing. The face she turned to North Branston now bore eloquent testimony to the suffering it had caused her; suffering which in so strong a woman seemed out of all proportion to the cause. It was the face of a woman who had not slept for nights, and whose every nerve was tense with pain. Her cheeks were haggard, and her lips were pale. The lines into which her mouth was compressed were cut deep. Her eyes were sunken and burning, and there was an indefinable kind of fierceness in them.

They gazed across the room at North Branston, and apparently her physical distress stood between her and the irritability which he usually created in her. She looked at him as though she saw him a long way off. The next instant, as if by an unconscious effort of will, a film passed across the singular wildness of her eyes, and she turned them hurriedly away from him.

"Constance is mistaken!" she said. Her voice was as unlike itself as was her face. It was loud and strained.

North, who had been observing her with unmoved professional eyes, drew a step or two nearer to her.

"You are in great pain, Adelaide!" he said coldly. "You had better let me see what I can do for you." With a movement which in a person of her physique was extraordinarily nervous, she shrank back as he approached, and he stopped instantly, with a slight contraction of the muscles of his mouth.

"No! no!" she said. "It's nothing! It's no worse than it has been. You couldn't do anything."

Her eyes wandered restlessly and painfully about the room as she spoke, as though dreading to rest upon his figure, and her usually abrupt decision of speech was totally absent. Her words hurried out one after another as though one statement alone were insufficient — insufficient, strange as it seemed and eloquently as it testified to the state of her nerves, to defend her from him.

North Branston shrugged his shoulders and waited a moment. Then he said abruptly:

"Where is Dr. Vallotson?"

There was a moment's dead pause. Apparently Mrs. Vallotson had realised her own want of self-control, and the silence was due to her determination to master herself before she spoke again. Her face was set like marble, and her voice was almost toneless in its composure.

"He was called to Hatherleigh Grange," she said. "The new people arrived two days ago, it seems."

"What time did he go?"

"At about eleven."

"Then he will be back before long," said North, turning on his heel. "If you prefer to wait for him it is as you choose, of course, Adelaide!"

She made no answer, and he crossed the room to the door. His hand was on the latch, and he was going out without glancing at her again, when Mrs. Vallotson stopped him.

"North!" she said.

"Well?"

"Have you refused that appointment?"

North Branston did not answer for a moment, nor did he turn to her.

"Do you mean the London appointment?"

"Yes!"

"I have refused it!" he said grimly. "If you have decided that you would like to get rid of me, Adelaide, it is too late."

He left the room without another word, and she turned mechanically to her writing-table.

There was no written letter upon it, however, a quarter of an hour later, when the luncheon-bell rang and she rose slowly and heavily. North and Constance were waiting for her in the dining-room, and the three sat down to lunch in silence.

The meal was nearly over, and the silence, as far as Mrs. Vallotson was concerned, was unbroken, when the front door opened under a rather irritable touch, and Dr. Vallotson's voice was heard speaking to his groom. His words were lost in a sudden exclamation from Constance.

"Mother," she said, "how you started! I'm quite sure you feel worse than you say."

Mrs. Vallotson, her face a singular grey colour from the throb of her nerves which had called forth the girl's words, turned upon her with glittering eyes.

"Don't talk nonsense, Constance!" she said. "I don't like it."

Her tone was one which the girl had never heard before. With a quick movement, half wonder, half resentment, Constance drew back, biting her lip as her father came into the room.

There was a mixture of testiness and satisfaction in Dr. Vallotson's face, and his first words spoke to the former feeling.

"Tut, tut!" he said fretfully, as he moved round the room to his chair. "I'm tired to death. Such roads! Upon my word, the state of the country is a disgrace. What have you got there, my dear?"—this to his wife in a slightly modified tone. "Cutlets? Very well."

Having received his lunch with some disfavour, expressed in a variety of more or less inaudible grunts and groans, the more satisfactory point of view appeared gradually to assert itself. He turned to North with an unusually tolerant expression.

"Well," he said, "I couldn't get to the committee meeting, after all. I hope you explained that I had intended to be there; fully intended it, as you know. A call from Hatherleigh Grange—that was what prevented me."

He paused and applied himself with increased relish to his lunch, a benign air of self-importance dawning on his features. His speech received no verbal reply, North Branston responding with a gesture, and he went on with growing satisfaction and self-congratulation.

"I've paid a very pleasant call," he said, "very pleasant indeed! Dear me! what a fine place it is to be sure."

The observation was received with indifferent silence by North. Mrs. Vallotson, judging from the set of her face, was hardly attending. The pain in her hand was evidently making heavy demands upon her endurance. So Constance said, with rather supercilious interest:

"Hatherleigh Grange, father?"

"Yes, my dear; yes. Hatherleigh Grange. I don't fancy you've ever been there. But you'll go before long, of course. Very pleasant people," he continued, making the announcement to his wife. "Very pleasant indeed. Sir William was most cordial in the way of showing me over the place—improvements, and so on, you know. Dear me! what a lot of money they must have spent over it. He expressed himself in a most friendly way as to Lady Karslake's anxiety to make your acquaintance, my dear. I did not have the pleasure of meeting her ladyship, I regret to say, but I have no doubt that you will find her an acquisition—quite an acquisition."

All Dr. Vallotson's irritability had disappeared; he was in a state of irrepressible elation. He paused a moment, and then continued with pompous expansiveness:

"You'll want the carriage to take you out to Hatherleigh, of course! Now, when would you think of calling, Adelaide my love?"

For the first time since her husband's communicative vein developed itself, Mrs. Vallotson moved. She had been sitting erect with one clenched hand resting on the table. Now she leaned back in her chair looking straight before her.

"I don't intend to call!" she said.

Her voice was almost strident in its determination, and even North Branston's eyebrows moved slightly as Constance turned quickly towards her. For a moment no one spoke. Then Dr. Vallotson, to whose forehead a faint pink flush had mounted, cleared his throat.

"I—I hardly think I understand you, my dear," he said. "You don't intend to call on Lady Karslake?"

"No!"

"My dear!" Dr. Vallotson's voice had risen several notes in the course of his previous speech, and he took up the word now on a higher note still, and in a tone which he very seldom ventured upon with his wife. The pink upon his forehead had deepened perceptibly; the irascibility which pervaded him on his first entrance was evidently stronger in character, and nearer the surface than usual. "I—I think you hardly understand the position. Lady Karslake expects it!"

Mrs. Vallotson did not move. A singular little spasmodic smile touched the icy composure of her face.

"I am hardly prepared to be dictated to by Lady Karslake's expectation!" she said.

A kind of choke came from her husband—an inarticulate sound expressive of boundless incredulity and indignation which habit hardly permitted him to express. He pushed back his plate and sat drumming on the table with his napkin-ring, facing Mrs. Vallotson with a weak and angry self-assertion dawning on his face.

"The circumstances of the case," he began loftily; "I—I mean—the demands of common civility—taking into consideration that the preliminary steps have already been taken——" His voice was rising higher and higher when his wife interrupted him.

"If you had taken the trouble to ascertain my views on the subject, the preliminary steps would not have been taken," she said. "The Grange is a county place. I do not care for the position involved in a calling acquaintance there! I shall not call!"

The harsh decision with which she spoke was even an accentuation of a tone which, as a usual thing, reduced Dr. Vallotson to silence. North Branston, who had sat with folded arms, a frowning, but otherwise indifferent, listener to the discussion, pushed back his chair and rose as assuming that the conversation was concluded. But Dr. Vallotson's temper was evidently not in its normal condition. The flush upon his forehead had spread all over his face, and had changed from pink to crimson. The little, spare figure seemed to inflate itself with angry pomposity. His position in opposing his wife was so rare as to be desperate; and his consciousness of the fact hurled him to extremes and clothed his daring with violence.

"There may be two opinions on that point!" he said, in a high-pitched voice. "I consider that your refusal to do so is an insult to my friends—an insult which I will not permit—will not permit, I say! That people like Sir William and Lady Karslake, county people, and people well known to the world, should be good enough to wish for our acquaintance, and that they should be treated as—as you propose, would be—would be—scandalous! Scandalous, and nothing else!"

Mrs. Vallotson rose abruptly.

"Robert," she said, "you are forgetting yourself!" She glanced quickly round to where Constance, with her cheeks indignantly flushed, sat gazing loftily into space. "Go away, child!" she said. But Dr. Vallotson's emotion had passed beyond his control.

"Understand me!" he continued, emphasizing his words with a hand that shook with anger. "I insist! I say that I insist!"

He had risen excitedly to his feet as he spoke, and the last word was emphasized by a violent stamp of his foot. The movement was hardly made when his pompous little figure, quivering with passion, collapsed suddenly into the chair behind him with an inarticulate groan of self-pity.

"Confound it!" he said. "I had a twinge last night. Gout, of course. Oh!" with another groan. "Oh, confound it! Plague take it! I'm in for a sharp attack!"

Half an hour later Dr. Vallotson, with his foot swathed in the regulation fashion, was established in his study, a victim to the severest pangs of gout. He was querulous and irritable to the world at large; but to his wife, who had superintended the arrangements for his comfort in grim silence, he was meekness itself. In his present predicament nothing unconnected with his personal discomfort was of the slightest consequence to him.

A SUNNY CORNER OF EUROPE.

I was told that Lausanne was one of the dullest and least attractive places in the world. But as my informant was a prize-fighter in ill health, staying at the same hotel, I did not quite credit his criticism.

Certainly the day of my arrival was one calculated to depress. The city and its surroundings—including the atmosphere—were embraced by a grey mist with a touch of dampness in it. I could not, indeed, see the lake until I got close to it. Mont Blanc was of course a mere myth at a time when only two or three hundred yards of water were visible from the lake's very shores. For several minutes I stood above the lake side, staring at a black object that seemed to be an apparition in the unlovely empyrean. In fact, however, it was only a boat with a pair of oars, as far out as the eye could carry. It suggested a large centipede bereft of ninety-eight of its legs more than aught else.

To kill part of the afternoon, I strolled along the hard high-road in the direction of Morges, and was greatly struck by the abundant opportunity a man has in this part of Europe of incurring a fine. It is four francs for going round a corner at a trot, if you are a horse and cart; six francs for soiling the pump water; five francs for washing clothes in the public fountains without a license, or at an improper time; and four or six francs for invading private roads. One of these four-franc trespasses was almost irresistible. The road trended from the thoroughfare towards a little knoll above, yet close to the lake. Here were

seats and a slim tree or two. The outlook was enchanting—at least, it must be in clear weather. I imagine the proprietor, being a just man, has connived at a mere four-franc fine in this case because of the exceptional allurements of his little property. Had it been a nice day I would have broken the law and paid my three and fourpence cheerfully.

Of course the roads here are hedgeless. We Britons, in our matchless self-conceit, are prone to flatter ourselves about the beauty of our hedges. Now a hedge, especially if well tangled and tall, is a beautiful object, and may be endured if there is nothing more beautiful in sight which it conceals. Else it wants uprooting. In Switzerland, for example, and notably by Geneva's shores, hedges would be provocative of raving. Moreover, they seem to check the air's agitations—an undesirable thing when the day is warm and breezes are hungered for. Not that it mattered much on this day. I walked for the sake of walking. Sight-seeing was out of the question.

Anon, however, being weary, I deviated to the sequestered small village of S. Sulpice, where I made a most unrighteous stir among the white-capped old dames who were sitting at their windows sighing for an unfamiliar spectacle. Here I took coffee at the Café du Chasseur, whose sign-board depicted an extremely jaunty and self-possessed young man with a pointed beard, a gun, the inevitable game-bag, and a dog. It was not a day for vivacious conversation, but, for all that, my hostess and I talked for about twenty minutes. French is the language for a fluency that signifieth nothing—or next to nothing. No literary Englishman, for example, could possibly have written as much as Rousseau without saying about ten times as much. When I left S. Sulpice to return to Lausanne, all that my twenty minutes' talk had told me was that the village sends its milk into the city every morning and fetches its cans thence every evening. The lady, however, wished me "bon voyage" as if I were going right off to the antipodes, instead of doing merely what the village milk-cans do twice daily.

S. Sulpice buries its dead in an open enclosure in the middle of a field outside the village. A more rude and unlovely site in itself cannot be imagined. I doubt not, however, that when the sun shines the graves look upon a prospect of some beauty.

But what a change the night wrought in the weather! When I woke in the morning it was to see the snow-clad summits of the mountains on Geneva's southern shore glistening in the sunshine, and the lake itself a pool of gold. The frost in the air did not detract from the glorious spectacle.

I saw enough, too, of Lausanne's populace to convince me that the above-mentioned pugilist was jaundiced. How could it be otherwise when it is notorious that the city abounds in young ladies' schools? I met the young ladies themselves, in endless troops, chattering in the brightness, attended by equally loquacious governesses, and all with cheeks beautifully touched by Jack Frost's enviable hand. They were of several nationalities. At one moment a musical babble of French flitted by; then it was German, and then English. The other tongues I do not attempt to identify.

I suppose a professional pugilist's idea of a face is based upon his estimate of its "punchable" qualities—if I may be excused this expressive but otherwise most barbarous word. To him a city full of mere school girls would naturally seem unbearably insipid.

Ere I left Lausanne I learnt more about my poor pugilist. Though he had gained belts and stakes of hundreds of pounds in two or three continents, he had failed to keep his wife's love or esteem, or whatever it is that most aids the married life. They were, in fact, a separated couple. Yet there was a sparkle of romance—call it maudlin romance if you will—in the matter. The lady—a girl of one or two-and-twenty—resided in Lausanne, in a villa of her husband's renting, while her spouse lived the hotel life. They exchanged letters daily. There was also a kind feminine intermediary who was trying to bridge the chasm that sundered them. After dinner the poor pugilist more than once shed tears over his wife's epistles, and was then wont to extract from his breast-pocket a photograph, taken during the honeymoon, and pass it round for inspection.

Lausanne is not exactly a winter resort. The "bise" can get it, and the "bise" is a demon at times. Nevertheless, though dull in a gentlemanly way, it pleases. Its pensions are quite grandiose: stately white palaces in their own gardens, with fascinating bowers and balustrades, perched one above the other in their struggle to obtain as many windows as possible "en plein midi." These and the number of "instituts des demoiselles" give the tone to the place.

There is a cathedral, high up, accessible

by a long staircase half under wooden roofing, and worth climbing to. Not for its interior ornaments, however. The Protestants of the sixteenth century or so settled all its pride in this particular. The few monuments that remain are broken-nosed and scrawled with initials in a way that would have satisfied the most zealous of our own Puritan iconoclasts. But the symmetry of the nave is unaltered, even though the present-day altar is a mere slab of marble, naked as that of a fishmonger's shop before the arrival of the day's provision from Billingsgate.

They are a strong-minded, amiable people—these Switzers of Lausanne. When the sun shines, contentment glows on their brown faces, and their attitudes and speech rejoice the Northerner here for a change. Yet these qualities in them cannot in justice be held as so very remarkable. Nature, as they see her envisaged in the radiant lake, set with graceful sails, and with the soothing, majestic beauty of the serrated and cone-shaped snow-crests of the Alps beyond, is the great tranquilliser. If they and we could change climates and landscapes for a decade, the effect upon national character would be extraordinary. For my part, I believe that in such a case we should astonish the world by our amiability as well as our genius. Perhaps, however, our constitution would suffer.

At Lausanne, in the Cathedral Close, there was a foot of snow, and they did not put water in the jugs overnight lest the ice should break them. At Montreux, about an hour's ride eastwards, by the lake, there was no snow and the sun burned the skin. It is the "bise" that makes the difference. The mountains block this engaging corner of the lake against the hated intruder from the north.

Hence, too, the added luxuriance of vegetation. Montreux way there are palms and orange-trees as on the Riviera. Save on exceptionally clear days, you do not here see much of the great lake. The western and middle reaches of it are mist—nothing else. That does not signify, however. It is more snug as it is. The mind willingly accepts the deceit which makes it appear that the twenty or five-and-twenty square miles of dazzling water visible are all the lake. Sparkling Alps embrace these parts of the horizon, and the sun seems concentrated upon the pool they bind.

One sees the mildness of the climate in the quality of its patrons. If you have had a good time elsewhere in the world for say sixty or seventy years, and wish to be let down gently through the rest of your term, you cannot possibly do better than come hither. For the phthisical, too, this seems an ideal spot.

I was more impressed by the veterans here than by the invalids. Such hale white-haired gentlemen and resolute white-haired ladies! The latter struck me as the more practical in their methods of taking the air. They seemed devoted to boots very thick in the soles, whereas their coevals of the other sex went in rather for such fashionable fripperies as brown boots and spats. It was especially exhilarating to see them of a morning clumping along the glorious lake promenade, with sticks like alpenstocks, casting bright if faded glances about them, which as much as enquired: "Are we not fine specimens for our age?" Answering at a venture, they certainly were that.

Their masculine contemporaries, on the other hand, looked rather bored, as if they doubted now and then whether they might not do wisely to have another year or two of life in a metropolis ere striking root finally here. But their tanned faces, their agile though measured movements, and the cigars they smoked, all indicated them in possession of as much of the "corpus sanum" as they had the right to expect, even under the best of conditions.

There is a Kursaal at Montreux, with the usual comforts of such establishments and the added thrill of a little vice. This vice takes the form of a "Salon de récréation," which is almost totally absorbed by a machine or circular racecourse of green baize, for the sportive movements of a number of little metal horses. The gamble thus provided for the Kursaal's members is, like the local climate, of the mildest. The maximum stake is one franc. Financial ruin is therefore all but an impossibility here.

The concerts given in the Kursaal after dinner are pleasant enough in their way, though of course not up to the Monte Carlo standard. One gets an idea of the valetudinarian tone of Montreux society in the scant patronage accorded to these concerts. The old gentlemen and old ladies who look so vigorous at ten o'clock in the morning do not turn out after dark; and of course the more accredited invalids of the community do not. One evening two ladies and myself had the music all to ourselves. This was so dismal that I soon withdrew to the smoking-room adjacent, where things were only a little more lively.

The Montreux hotels are admirable. Their exteriors suggest bills of alarming magnitude; but these need not be forthcoming. Here, as at Lausanne, it is the thing to go "en pension." I was received in this way, and given a south-room with two windows on the lake, for seven francs a day. It was a ridiculous price considering that a young moon was in the heavens. Its silvery sheen on the lake was a sight to rave about. Nor was this all. I dressed of a morning with my eyes much less concerned with my toilet than with the superb spectacle of the Dent du Midi's snows and rocks bossed against the blue sky. Electric light runs rampant on these shores. The road towards Vevey and Chillon is lit with it, and so are the hotels. It was worth seven francs a day to see the white marble lady in my hotel garden holding her egg-shaped electric lamp for our guidance through the exotic foliage about her.

General conversation here is not exciting. It is even melancholy. I learnt this at the outset. There were two pallid Frenchmen opposite me at table.

"Well, my friend," said the one to the other when he had bowed, "have you coughed to-day?"

"Ma foi, no," was the brisk reply, in a hoarse tone of thanksgiving; "not yet."

The next moment he coughed. The lady who was his neighbour lifted her pencilled eyebrows, and either sighed or pretended to sigh. Elsewhere, on the same occasion, another lady and a handsome young man were conspicuously without appetite; and the former periodically touched her eyes with her handkerchief. Her son, the young man's brother, had, it appeared, just been sent off to join them from England, and was then lying ill with pneumonia in Paris. Ere the meal was over these two had initiated an attack upon medical men as a whole for their murderous indiscretion which met with much support from other English-speaking persons present.

As a diversion from such dolorous themes, there were several pretty girl faces among us: vivacious and healthy. They seemed to seek somewhat pathetically for a responsive smile of the kind more suited to their time of life and aspirations.

In coming to these shores, I had meant to try and realise Rousseau as he fancied he realised himself. I read his "Confessions" and "The New Héloïse," and grew somnolent over the one and a little shocked with the other. But it is hard to take the compassionable gentleman seriously. He seems much too plaintive in his confidences. The pleasures life afforded him were certainly not of a robust kind—save those he derived from his walking tours—but they were also a myriad times more abundant than many men have meted out to them. Of all subjective prigs he appears the archtype. There is a wine-shop or something of the kind by Clarens—between Vevey and Montreux—consecrated to "Le Bosquet de Julie." I believe I ought here to have felt a sympathetic quiver for the sweet, misguided, yet most verbose innocent who is the heroine of "The New Héloïse." But I felt no such thing. I had an inclination to laugh, and I laughed.

There was an English parson at my hotel in Montreux, a white-bearded, hearty man who smoked his pipe in the corridor after meals and liked to discuss Alpine ascents. I mentioned Jean Jacques to him.

"Oh, that man!" he exclaimed impatiently, throwing back his shoulders. "What a fellow! Fancy a man coming to Vevey, shedding tears of sensibility—he'd call 'em that—into the lake, and then writing about it!"

Rousseau never disguised his distaste for us Britons. Instinct—it was not knowledge—for once did not play him a scurvy trick. He was not made out of the mould that serves for us.

Vevey reminds one of another man as well as Rousseau: Edmund Ludlow, to wit. On his tombstone in St. Martin's Church here—a red-brick building with a tower, like many an English village church—he is termed "Hybernorum Domitor" and much else. The homely preamble, "Siste gradum et respice," invites the pilgrim to read his somewhat lengthy epitaph. But it is hardly worth while to do that. The marble just gives us the husk of the man. It is a deal more interesting to think of his sober, sunny life in Vevey for more than a score of years, with the snowy Alps and the lustrous lake with its lateen sails before him. There was a fair amount of shade to it, besides. The Vevey magistracy were more than civil to the illustrious regicide. They gave him a guard, assured him of their especial esteem, and arranged that he might sound the loud alarm bell of the little place if anything happened. But he had to be extremely circumspect in his movements, and for weeks at a time he did not leave his house by the lake. Guizot tells us more about the man in a

few words than the epitaph in many: "He lived at Vevey henceforward, obscure yet not at ease, forgotten by nearly every one, except the assassins."

A pretty touch, in truth!

St. Martin's Church has a commanding situation. It is approached by a zigzag road, and has a terrace much affected by invalids and others who love to bask in the winter sunshine. An artist would find endless material for studies in human grouping here. Rich vine lands, their soil as brown and warm-looking as a sealskin jacket, slope to the north from the building, with blue-bloused workers spudding among the plants. The grey rocks spring above the vineyards; and their snow-clad summits, shaded by ink-black pines, take fantastic shapes against the heavens' blue. Beneath the church the golden dome of a Russian chapel holds the eye for a moment among the multitude of villas, pensions, and hotels. The effulgent lake glitters close beyond. One can fancy the cloaked regicide enjoying something of this prospect, with the high-booted Switzer soldiers cracking their jokes at a distance, while keeping a vigilant outlook for obtrusive gun-barrels and strange faces. An electric lamp now hangs in the porch of the church, and every five minutes of the day and evening an electric tramcar jingles its way along the high-road to Clarens, Montreux, and Chillon.

Chillon must not be overlooked. Places and things so glamorously immortalised are wont to affront expectation; but this castle does not do so. Byron tells poetically how

> There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
> In Chillon's dungeons deep and old;
> There are seven columns, mossy and grey,
> Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
> A sunbeam which hath lost its way.

But nowadays the poor vagrant sunbeam is entitled to no particular regard in the dungeons. These may be as dark as Tartarus when your cicerone opens the portal. She touches a key, however, and an electric lamp straightway beams softly upon the stones.

It is a strong and noble pile, finely set in the shallows of the lake, and the ivy and shrubs which deck its walls and landward side do not make it gloomy. It is just a spot of shadow between the white Alps and the azure skies and the crystal-clear water. There is not too much of it, else it would be sombre; nor is it so small that it can be termed puny.

Byron may be read for an untruthful yet engrossing account of some of its vicissitudes. Your guide does her best to make your flesh creep and your hair rise like physical notes of ejaculation as she leads you from dungeon to dungeon and torture chamber. But even thumbscrews, racks, and rusty rings in the living rock can't stand against the purge of time, and we have long since swept these things into the limbo of the obsolete. An influenza—Russian—is not more irksome than the effort to satisfy an exacting cicerone by a pretence of horror-stricken interest in these monotonous relics of that comfortable mediævalism some of us affect to admire.

The Duchess's boudoir, upstairs, was infinitely more cheerful and absorbing. Some of her travelling-trunks were by the wall: huge iron-clamped boxes that no railway porter would touch in these days. Her door was designed to stand a siege, even though all the rest of the castle had surrendered. And from the window she could drop undesirable lovers and other inconvenient visitors plumb into the turquoise-tinted water a few score feet below. If she were a romantic duchess, she could not be better suited than with an apartment that showed her Jupiter and the young moon coquetting over the lake in the indigo-hued canopy of night.

We were a party of five to be led through the castle, requiring information in three different languages. You should have seen the guide's face when she understood how her brain was to be taxed. But her endeavours were of the heroic kind, and no one moved a muscle at her grammatical errors. I was fortunate enough, however, to be last out of one of the dungeons and to hear her moan, "How it is fatiguing!" as she coaxed her forehead with the palm of one hand.

Best of all, the castle kitten was of the procession—a volatile young thing with a stiff tail. It was a royal antidote to grief or dolorous musing to see the little creature start at its own shadow in the torture chamber, and leap high like a hooked trout, with ears set back, when Bonnivard's fetter was clanked against the rock. Upstairs, in the banqueting chamber, it purred and licked its legs with a most ladylike complacence. I never saw better acting, nor better judged. Of all the sights of Chillon, its kitten pleased me most.

To get these old-time cobwebs out of my head, I climbed from Chillon towards the Rochers de Naye. I was soon out of the zone of caressing zephyrs. The wind blew

keen a thousand feet over Montreux, and pearly icicles draped the hillsides.

Yet the sun continued to shine brightly, and blackbirds tripped to and fro among the brambles and scrub, with lively rustling. Half the people I passed were English boys and girls, rosy and gay, chattering as if Switzerland had been created for them. What a tonic was this air, to be sure! The eye, too, revelled in its environment. Geneva's lake a veiled silver plaque, for there was a nether mist; the southern Alps showing only their majestic heads, cameoed upon the blue; near at hand the long, olive-coloured, pine-decked slopes of the ravine that runs from Montreux towards the Col de Jaman; and, above, the black rock teeth of Jaman and Naye streaked and clotted with snow!

If nature could give us Northerners half as much pleasure in winter as she gives these Switzers by Montreux, we should all, I believe, become pure Pantheists.

THE STORY OF A LITTLE CHILD.

A COMPLETE STORY.

JAMIE GORDON was only a day labourer on a Highland estate, with a weekly wage and no high ambitions; his mental horizon had narrow boundaries, his life had the calm tenor of recurrent monotonous duties. But into such lives there enter emotions as vivid, and tragedies as profound, as into the lives of the world's higher orders of men. And perhaps because of the colourlessness of those everyday prosaic existences, and the stir unwonted circumstance and passion makes in them, the fang of suffering goes all the deeper when it strikes suddenly.

Gordon had one of those somewhat melancholic temperaments allied to a poetic nature, which are not uncommon among the Scotch peasantry. His thoughts came slowly and were difficult of translation into language, but his imaginings, though vague, were pure and a source of pleasure to himself in his lonely hours of toil. He had an innate reverence for good, a keen love of nature as he knew it in the woods and hills around his native valley, a tender affection for flowers and animals and birds, a passionate love of country and of home, and a tenacity of attachment which had in it large capabilities of pain.

He had experienced already, though he was little over thirty, keen joy and bitter grief; for the girl for whom, like Jacob, he had waited and served long, and who had been his happy and well-loved wife for two short years, had died after a few days illness, leaving him with a year-old baby girl. At the time of his great loss he did not think his broken life would ever piece together again, but the tender touch of little Elsie's hands had healed the wound so far that he could bear to face the future with its far-stretching unrelieved loneliness. And now the blue-eyed, sunny-haired child was four years old, full of life, and fun, and glee, and he lived but for her. All the love which had been his young wife's was concentrated on this baby who had her eyes, and hair, and dimples.

He left her reluctantly in the morning with the old woman who came to look after child and house when he became a widower, and grudged the lagging hours at his daily labour when he must be absent from her; this one thought alone helping him—that it was the feeding and clothing of his child which made absence a necessity. The goal of all his thoughts during the day was the hour when, reaching the bend of the road, he neared his cottage door and could see the tiny figure run out to greet him; or she would sometimes venture on the high road, hide behind a bush, and rush out with a gleeful "Daddy!" as he passed. On summer evenings they would wander hand in hand to the river's bank, or sit in the woods while he told her the names of the different birds and noted their several songs. On Sundays he took her to the country church near, and invariably the sunny head drooped on his shoulder, and while the child slept the father's prayers were none the worse said that his lips rested on the bright waving hair. The darker evening were spent indoors, the child on his knee her small hands tight clasped round his neck or playing with his hair, her tongue loosed, telling him how she and dolly had passed the day. This doll, her inseparable companion, was a hideous, cheap wooden toy he had brought her as "fairin'" from market in the neighbouring village, with roughly-hewn features, smudges of paint on its high cheek-bones, tufts of coarse hair sticking out from either side of its head, arms and legs stiff-jointed and angular, but beloved by Elsie above everything else she possessed.

Each evening plans were laid as to what she and "dolly" would do when she was big. She would bury her face in her father's neck and whisper, "We'll live alane, dear daddy, you and me, we'll no need Betty then; I'll cook and wash for ye, jist you and me oorsels." He was actually jealous of the

old woman who had the child all day while he was absent, and he insisted on doing everything for her when he was at home. His clumsy fingers untied the strings and fumbled awkwardly with the hooks and buttons of her little frocks as he undressed her for the night; it was at his knee her "guid words" were said; he laid her in her little cot, and sat holding her hand or knelt with his cheek against hers until she fell into her rosy, happy sleep. Then he got up to forecast the day when lovers would come wooing, and her heart would go out to some one else, and "Daddy" would no longer hold the first place. There are some men on whose joy there always lies a shadow. Each morning he left her with regret, and an earnest prayer to Heaven to keep her safe till his return.

One evening he asked: "What hae you and dolly been doin' the day, my lammie?"

"We've been playing at fun'rals," she said lightly. "I pit dolly i' the cairtie, an' hurled her doon to the san'-heap, and I diggit a hole and pit her in, bit her airm stickit oot an' she wadna lie strecht, so I tuik her oot an' I med the hole bigger, an' dolly pit me in, bit ye ken, daddy, she cudna cover me up. It was Betty tellt me aboot Sandy McIntosh's mither, that she wis deed, an' they put her intil a black hole."

"That's no a bonnie playock, my doo," said the man shuddering, as he folded her closer to his breast. "I wadna play at that agen. Ise tell ye what'll be better: the verra neist time I gang to the toon, I'll buy you a wee spaidie an' a rake, an' we'll mak' a bit gairden, an' I'll get a puckle seeds, an' you an' dolly can bury them gin ye like, an' sune the wee floories'll come up."

"O, daddy, winna that be fine? an' we'll hae floors o' our ain! What day will ye gang? Will ye gang on Saturday? I wiss it wis the morn," said the little coaxing voice, as Elsie rubbed her soft cheek against her father's arm.

"We'll no jist promise for Setturday, but we'll see."

"What's deein', daddy? Betty said Sandy's mither wadna cum back, an' she sed my mither was deid too. Ye'll no be deein', daddy, will ye?"

"Na, na, bairnie, Betty sudna speik sic havers," he said gruffly; then turning to her with a smile he asked: "Wis dolly bad the day, did ye gie her her licks?"

"Ay did I, she wis gey thrawn, an' her hair wadna lie strecht though I tuik the blackin' brush till 't, bit I love dolly neist best to you, daddy, better than Betty, though I like Betty fine tae."

After the child was asleep in bed Jamie went slowly "ben" to the kitchen where the old woman sat knitting in the fire-light.

"Betty, what's this the litlun's gotten in her heid aboot deein' and foonerals? I didna like that kind of talk frae a bairn o' her years."

"Losh me! Jamie Gordon, what's gotten ye noo?" replied the old woman, gazing at him through her "glasses." "Yir fair dementit aboot that lassie o' yours. Ye ken fine we maun a' dee, an' she beet to ken't tae some day. Ye surely wadna hae her brocht up like a haythen Turk?"

"She'll learn to sup sorrow sune eneuch, I trow," he answered sadly. "I wad hae her to be as licht-hairted as she can, an' as lang as she can."

"Well, I'm sure," said the affronted Betty. "It dings me sometimes to hear the clavers you an' she haud over that dall o' hers, as if it wis a real livin' crater instead o' a bit o' wud, an' a mortial ugly bit at that. Ae nicht I actooally heard her saying, 'Gude bless dollie.'"

"The wee lammie," said the man, a sweet smile breaking over his sad face; "an' what hairm wis there?"

"Weel, Jamie Gordon, I niver did think ye had muckle common sense, bit I think the less o' you the noo. It wad set ye better to be learnin' her the cattichis than sittin' idle a' the fore nichts haverin' aboot that dall!"

One day the following week Betty was busy with her weekly baking, and Elsie, wrapped in a little warm cloak her father had got her lately, put her doll into the cart and went out to play. It took some time to arrange the wooden figure to her satisfaction, as it would slip off the seat, and the refractory arms had a trick of suddenly jerking up in the air instead of decorously remaining in her lap, but never did mother rejoice more proudly in the beauty of her daughter than did Elsie in the blotchy painted cheeks of her inseparable companion.

An hour passed. Betty had finished her baking, laid aside board and roller, tidied her kitchen, and noticing the unwonted silence—for the child was never long absent—she went to the door to look for her. She was not playing in the little square of grass which passed for a garden; she called, but got no reply; wondering, but not yet alarmed, she went a few paces round to the back of the cottage, muttering:

"Whaur's the little cutty gaen to noo?" and again called, "Elsie, Elsie."

There was a disused mill-dam, a mere shallow pool, not more than a foot deep and never more than half-filled with water, about a hundred yards from the house, and Betty, looking in this direction, saw something which froze the blood in her veins and deprived her for a moment of the power to move or speak.

What she saw was a little figure in a red cloak lying face downwards in the pool, and beside it—the cord still clasped in the tiny hand—was a half-submerged cart, and inside, the staring goggle-eyed doll with its tufts of coarse black hair. In a moment she had seized the child and the cart, and clasping them in her arms fled to the house, calling loudly on a little boy who was at the moment passing on the high-road.

"Rin, laddie, for yir life to Maister Macdonal's an' speir him gin he'll lat's gig gang to the village for the doctor, for I doot Elsie's drooned; an' gif ye meet Jamie Gordon, sen' him hame as fast 'ye can."

In a moment she had stripped the clothes off the little cold body, rolled her in a warm blanket, moaning and praying audibly as she went to and fro. Meanwhile the boy ran as fast as he could up the hill to the house of the grieve who possessed the gig, found Mr. Macdonald at home, who lost no time in harnessing his horse and starting himself to fetch the doctor. At the cross-roads on the way back, the boy saw Jamie Gordon coming home at his usual brisk pace, his face bright with anticipation of the long evening with his child.

"Whaur hae ye been, my bairnie, to get sic a reid face? Ye luik as if ye'd been rinnin' a race," said the man, with his usual kindly address to any young creature.

"Sae I wis—rinnin' to fess the doctor," said the boy; "an' Betty tell't me to tell ye gin I saw ye tae hurry hame as fast ye cud, for I doot yer litlun——"

Jamie stopped to hear no more; he flew like the wind down the hill till he gained his own door, and the piteous sight met his eye: his Elsie, his one little lamb, his all in life, her sunny hair all bedraggled, her white face mud-stained, her rounded limbs stiff and cold, on Betty's lap. He knelt down and took the tiny form from the weeping woman.

"Rax me yon buik frae the shelf," he said, and while he folded the little rolled-up body in one arm, he turned over the leaves of the book, till he came to one page containing a few simple instructions for the recovery of the drowned. Years ago, feeling that he must be father and mother both to his little one, he had gone to the lady at the "big house," the wife of his employer, and asked her to tell him of a book of simple cures for children's ailments. Here he hoped to find something for the present trouble.

Minutely, with careful womanish precision, he followed the directions of the book, gently raising the little arms to promote respiration, and using other simple measures. Once he got up from the hearth, a white despair on his face, and cried aloud: "He couldna do't. He couldna tak' her frae me!" Then finding his efforts at resuscitation unavailing, he opened his coat and waistcoat, and pressing the little creature to his breast, so that the heat from his body might impart some warmth to hers, waited with what patience he might for the coming of the doctor. By-and-by he came, and placing the child in his arms he said in a choking voice: "Bring her back to me, doctor, an' there's nothing i' this world 'at I wadna dae to serve you."

"We'll do what we can, Gordon, you may be sure," he said cheerily; but a glance told him there was nothing he could do. However, he did not desist his attempts at restoration for over an hour, each movement followed in anguished torture in Jamie Gordon's heart; then he said gently: "It's no use, Jamie; she was dead, poor little lassie, before they found her."

"Gie her to me," said the father, stretching out his arms, "an' thank ye kindly, sir."

Betty had broken out into noisy, unrestrained weeping: "O what gart me lat her oot o' my sicht? O waly, waly, the puir wean!"

"Whisht," said the man, "naebody's thinkin' o' blamin' you; I ken ye loved her weel. O God! my bairn, my bairn!"

Neighbours came to the door full of well-meant advice and loud-voiced sympathy. A death-bed is a time of thorough enjoyment to some of those honest souls; they love to condole or be condoled with; to discuss most impartially the virtues and failings of the deceased; but one look at the stricken father's face, full of a love they could not fathom, made them shrink away, and froze the glib words of comfort on their lips. With an almost fierce dignity he moved with his burden into the further

room and locked the door. No hand save his own should touch his darling. He had dressed her often in life, she laughing merrily over his awkwardness; now, with his heart dead as a stone within him, and hands which trembled, he brushed the shining curls, put the little nightgown on the unresisting form, and laid her on her bed.

Mr. Fraser, the minister, with whom Gordon was a great favourite, having heard of the sad accident, came late in the evening to offer his sympathy. Texts suitable to the occasion rose to his memory as he entered—texts of comfort—texts which, thank God, have comforted many a bereaved soul, but looking on this man he could not utter them. He could only take his hand in a warm human clasp, and looking on the smiling, placid face of the little dead child, mingle his tears with his. But as he rose to go he remembered his mission was to preach, to comfort, to exhort, and forced, as it seemed to himself, to fulfil the promptings of his calling, he said:

"Jamie, we will pray together for the strength to bear. You remember when Job was sorely afflicted, he was still enabled to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"Ay, sir," replied Jamie, with a smile which was more sad than any groan, "but he hed his wife left till him, an' tho' at times she may hae been an ill-tongued woman, still she wis there, and she wis his wife. I am alane. Elsie wis a' I hed, a' I hed in the haill warl'!"

The next day was Saturday, and as Jamie entered the village to order a coffin for his child and choose the spot where she would be laid, it struck him with a sudden stab that it was the very day he had promised to buy the spade for her garden. He could feel the coaxing arms round his neck as she wished "Saturday was come," and what a different errand the day had brought for him! The days before the funeral passed he knew not how. Stunned and dazed from the magnitude of the blow, yet feeling his loss acutely in every nerve, avoiding companionship, wandering from the house to the fatal mill-pond, spending hours beside the tiny coffin, wiping the mud-marks from the poor battered doll Elsie had loved, and reverently placing it and the little cart on the cupboard shelf—the four days were a lifetime of suffering.

Then he resumed his work, a silent, broken man; the hours of leisure were no longer fondly anticipated nor hailed with delight; rather he lingered at his labour so that he might not have to pass so many hours of lonely misery in his cottage, looking into the fire and brooding, brooding on his loss. Mr. Fraser threw himself in his way constantly, either when going to or returning from his work, engaging him in what conversation he could, trying to edge in a word of consolation and cheer.

"It's nae use, sir," said Jamie respectfully one day. "Ye mean well, nae doot, bit ye dinna ken what raal sorra is, or ye wadna spaak aboot it that wye. How could ye ken? Ye hae yir wife, yir fower bairns an' a happy hame. Gin ye lost a' that, d'ye think ye wad care for me comin' and tellin' you to cheer up an' be glad?"

Still the minister persevered in his weekly meetings and talks with Jamie, until he began to look out for him, and to be disappointed when he did not appear. Once when they had walked together a good way in silent companionship, Jamie suddenly broke out:

"Dinna think, Mr. Fraser, that I'm aye rebellin'. I am tryin' to thole, bit it's fell hard, it's fell hard."

"You are a young man yet, Jamie," said the minister, thinking of his own happy domestic lot; "you will, I hope, in time form other ties. Indeed, I may almost say it is your duty to do so; no man should indulge in morbid grief."

"Dinna say mair, sir," replied the man. "I've had ower muckle o' the lowsenin' o' ties on this airth to care aboot making ony mair; sic a thocht niver entered my head forbye."

Week by week Jamie Gordon seemed to grow thinner, and though patient and unmurmuring outwardly, deep lines formed themselves round his mouth, and dark shadows underneath them made his mournful eyes look bigger.

About this time Mr. Fraser left the parish for his annual three weeks' holiday, and the first news he heard on his return was that Jamie Gordon was lying seriously ill, having got a chill in consequence of a thorough wetting in a sudden storm.

"He's jist dwinin' awa'," said his informant; "there's nae tribble 'at ye can gie a name til't, it's jist decline an' grief thegither."

And so Mr. Fraser found when he went to see him. He was shocked at the ravages three short weeks had made; the sunken cheeks, bright colour, and wasted form told the tale of rapid consumption. One morning, seeing how weak he looked, Mr. Fraser

took his Bible from his pocket and read: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

"Ay, sir, it's a beautiful chapter, an' there's a heap o' comfort in 't, bit there's anither word i' that same buik that sumtimes fleys me. It ses among ither bad fowk 'at's to be shut oot frae heeven, idolaters can hae nae place. Noo, I idolised my wee Elsie, an' Gude help me, gin she were back the day, I fear me I should jist be duin' the varra same thing agen."

He paused, and while a faint flush overspread his pale face, he added deprecatingly: "Mr. Fraser, mebbe ye'll think it wrang, bit ye've been a guid frien' to me a' that time o' dool, an' I hae nabody else to dae onything for me. I wad like weel to hae her bit tippetie atween my haun's in my coffin."

He turned down the coverlet as he spoke, and there on his breast was Elsie's little red cloak, and beside him lay the rude wooden cart, and the broad, smiling, meaningless face of the battered doll.

"An' gin there wis room, I wad like the cairt an' the dollie beeried wi' me. Ye see if I hed them i' my han's I dinna think He wad hae the hert to turn me awa' frae the gate, an' there's One, wha tuik bairns that waurna sib till Him, on's knee, an' pat His haun's on their heids—that I think wad let me in, idolatry or no."

Which was very unorthodox, doubtless, but it was very human. The minister's class instincts prompted him to a gentle correction of these erroneous imaginings, but his man's heart only made him answer the dying man by a warm clasp in token of assent. He bent his ear to catch some murmuring words from Gordon's lips, which were parted with a smile. The words were: "She'd be main glad to see her dollie agen." A sudden moisture dimmed the minister's eyeglasses, and when he again turned to the bed, Jamie Gordon knew more of the mystery of pain and parting, of the "why" and "wherefore" of life, than all the theologians of all the schools could tell him, and a peace which was not of earth was smoothing out the lines in the sad, pathetic face.

SOME REGATTAS.

It is a sensible arrangement that tempers the tropical heat of the dog days with regattas. Sometimes, indeed, the heat is wanting, and a series of damp regattas under weeping skies are of a melancholy sufficient to tempt people to suicide. But when we are fairly in for a broil, when the City pavements are almost red hot, and people pant over ices and cooling drinks; when the Stock Exchange winks at flannels and white blouses, and Queen's Counsel are seen making for their chambers in straw hats; when the air in the scorched streets is like the breath of the simoon, then is the time to be up the river and assisting at the local regatta, preferably a good way off and hitched to the root of some spreading tree, where the ripple of the river, the rustle of leaves overhead, and the deeper murmur of the flags and waving bulrushes mingle with the distant strains of music, and the shouts that encourage contending crews.

All along the river there is a rolling fire of regattas. Henley opens the ball with the finest water show in the world, one of the sights of the century, which seems only to gain in brightness as that respectable epoch approaches its end. Yet the century was well advanced before people heard much about Henley. And when the late Charles Reade opened his fine romance of "Hard Cash" with a description of Henley Regatta, it was hardly more than a provincial function, in which mere boat-races formed the most important feature; races which local people witnessed comfortably from their carriages or camp-stools as the case might be, without any trouble or expense. Vast is the change since those dull and decorous days, and now the scene seems peopled as if with a swarm of bright-winged summer flies, myriad-hued and glittering, full of colour and movement.

The flash from Henley seems to fire a whole train of regattas. All the pretty places up the river duly celebrate the function, and the knights errant of the pliant oar may cruise from one to another and test their prowess in a succession of water tournaments. And the smart and trim regattas of the higher river are followed by the more popular festivals of the tidal waters. Places almost forgotten as riverside resorts—given up to workmen's dwellings, factories, soap and candle works—on some one day of the year commemorate a former state of existence when the river was their main thoroughfare, and watermen hung about the stairs to which people resorted as to cab-stands now.

The regatta originated in those palmy days for watermen. Of water pageants on the river there had never been any lack,

from the earliest recorded days. Nor of boat-races and water tournaments, as one may learn from any ancient book of sports. Doggett's coat and badge, the race for which still excites a warm interest along the riverside, commemorates the accession of the House of Hanover, and is still rowed on the day, August the first, on which the first of the Georges succeeded to the throne. But the regatta, as we know it now, had a more recent origin; and we may find in the "Annual Register" of the period "some Account of the new entertainment called a Regatta introduced from Venice into England" in the course of the year 1775. It was on Friday, the twenty-third of June, that the first of the series was inaugurated, when "the whole river from London Bridge to the Ship, Milbank, was covered with vessels of pleasure. Above one thousand two hundred flags were flying before four o'clock in the afternoon, and such was the public impatience that scores of barges were already filled. Everywhere scaffolds were raised, one even on the top of Westminster Hall, and before five o'clock Westminster Bridge was crowded with spectators." There were no other bridges then or iron girders to intercept the view of that noble stretch of water

Where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow.

And the expectant crowd were entertained by concerts under the arches, with drums, fifes, horns, trumpets, et cetera, and at intervals could be heard the merry peals of the bells of St. Margaret's and St. Martin's, while wandering minstrels sang appropriate ballads in which regatta was made to rhyme with Ranelagh. The avenues to the bridges were covered with gaming-tables, and on both sides of the water the scene was like that of a fair. The Duke of Richmond fired off guns from his mansion, His Grace of Montague returned the salute from his garden terrace. There were splendid companies at all the grand houses of Whitehall; and the pageant culminated in the appearance of the Lord Mayor in his state barge under a salute of twenty-one guns, when the wager boats started on their course, and as soon as the race was determined, the whole flotilla—Royal Dukes in their barges with the Royal standard flying, the City companies with their gilded barks, and the general crowd of boats, moved upwards towards Ranelagh a veritable floating town.

O do but think
You stand upon the rivage, and behold
A city on the inconstant billows dancing.

A few weeks later the Duke of Newcastle gave a magnificent regatta at his seat of Oatlands Park, when the young Prince of Wales and the jolly, masculine sporting Princess Amelia, his great-aunt, were of the party. And next year there was a grand regatta on the river between Kew and Richmond, when the King and Queen with the whole Royal family were on the water.

With such a good start the regatta has gone on flourishing and increasing to the present day. The crowds of pleasure-boats have, indeed, abandoned the tidal waters, and now spread themselves all the summer long over the pleasant upper reaches, from Richmond, even to Oxford. But there are still good regattas lower down, although some of the charm of them is gone for old stagers with the pleasant people who once lived in the jolly red-brick houses by the river, where a hospitable tradition was long preserved at regatta time. But Barnes and Putney are still there. And you may be acquainted with Brentford-on-Thames, where the canal barges resort, and tugs in clusters await the turn of the tide; or with Strand-on-the-Green, one of the pleasantest nooks of the old-fashioned, bargey, breezy, malty riverside; and all these and many more have their regattas in due season.

Lower still the regatta breaks out here and there in unexpected places. Is it Wapping Old Stairs Regatta, or Cherry Garden Wharf? Anyhow, banks and wharves are lined with spectators. The old riverside public-house swarms with guests, launches hover about the scene with much hooting, while the brimming tide lapping among old barges and black tarry piles bears to and fro a fleet of pleasure-boats of every imaginable shape and rig, and the shores resound with excited shouts. Anything wanting in scenic effect is compensated by the enthusiasm of those concerned. Each waterman has his clique who cheer him with words of advice and comfort. But when it is a question between Bill of the lead-mills and Joe of the soap-works, the whole assemblage takes sides, and excitement reaches its highest pitch.

All the way down the river, as it grows wider, rougher, and more sea-going in character, the regatta flourishes under changed conditions, the fragile craft of the upper river giving place to stout wherries, ships' gigs, and yachts of appreciable tonnage. And when the Crow Stone is passed and the towns by the river become fairly entitled to call themselves "on Sea," our

regatta assumes a curiously hybrid character. We have races for shrimp-boats, for whelk-cobbles, for sailing-barges, for river craft of all kinds. The local yacht club turns out its fleet, all spinnakers and balloon topsails. The canvas is crowded perhaps, figuratively as well as literally, for there is no time to spare. If we are grandly sea at noon—with real waves dashing against the shore, and white sails gleaming everywhere—by night we are all river again, a mere smear of river traced through a desert of sand, and our gay craft are gasping on the banks like fishes out of water. But while it lasts our regatta of the estuary is intense in its way. Our bit of esplanade is fairly crammed with people, in the narrow slip of beach below there is standing room only. As well as the brass band, that can play scarcely anything but bars of the "Conquering Hero," so thickly are the victors crowding in, we have pianos, harmoniums, concertinas without number, singers by the score, and as everybody knows the choruses and repeats them with great gusto, the general effect is a little bewildering. A fair, too, rages in the background, with steam-organs and horses that gyrate, frightsome whistles, swing-boats that simulate the pitch and roll of the deep sea, and many other distractions, distracting enough in good sooth.

And thus we may pursue the regatta, or be pursued by it, all round the British coast. It is an incident in most people's seaside holidays, and affords a welcome diversion in that usually uneventful period. But the regular sea-going regatta is naturally a much more dignified affair than the popular celebration just described. Smart yachts come in, smart people come ashore, everybody's talk is embroidered with nautical allusions. Over-night the smoking-rooms of the hotels are crowded with yachtsmen, who discuss the merits of rig and build with great fervour. And the moonlight brings everybody out on parade or pier, when as many soft words are whispered and as many vows exchanged as would freight a fairy fleet of cockle-shells. As for the veteran Ben Bolt, perhaps he thinks of sweet Alice and the halcyon regattas of other days. There was that one at Deal, for instance, when the tide ebbed and flowed almost without a ripple, lapping against the pebbles like the waters of some sylvan lake, and what flocks of pretty girls there were, and Alice the fairest of them all! Can that be Alice—the stout matronly woman with the elderly grizzled husband and tall handsome daughters, who are having their turn now under the moonlight and by the soft sea waves?

Nowhere, perhaps, is the regatta more enjoyable than along the Channel coast, where the sea seems to dance in at your very windows, and the white sails and white cliffs, with the nooks of verdure that lie between, are all as bright and fresh as they can be. And there is always the chance of the Fleet coming along, which affords a more impressive regatta than anything else. Indeed, the whole naval manœuvres may be looked upon as a prolonged regatta, with more effects in the way of search-lights, rockets, the firing of guns, and the hurrying to and fro of squadrons, than private enterprise can in any way come near. And if there is no naval engagement to be seen after all, there is always the excitement of rumour and expectation to keep you alive.

Then, as a sight to be seen, the finest of its kind on salt water so undisputedly, as Henley bears the bell among river shows, comes Cowes Regatta and the general congress of yachts in the Solent. And so from point to point along the coast the white wings cluster, and the bold seamen and hardy fishermen of the grand Devonshire shore, and the rough pilchard fishers of Cornwall, take their share in the aquatic tournaments.

And you may remember, perhaps, a Welsh regatta in that pleasant little bay set among the massive hills of wild Wales. What a confusion of tongues upon the narrow quay where the committee held its sittings, surrounded by an eager crowd which freely joined in its discussions! There was Captain Jones, in the capacious white waistcoat, the master of the one stout trading brig that sailed from the little port; and little Squire Evans, whose chief estate was a boat and a gun; and the rosy-faced innkeeper, and half-a-dozen more; while the grey-headed schoolmaster acted as secretary, and tried to harmonise matters by agreeing with everybody, however discordant their views. The fervid language of the Cymry lends itself to excited argument. You might think that such a war of words must end in a general scrimmage. But no; suddenly the whole affair is settled; the fishermen fly to their boats; the yachtsmen take their stations; a gun fires, and the whole fleet are away, and soon their sails are dotting the blue waters of the bay. Then the bulk of the spectators go quietly home to their midday meal, and wait for the cool of the

evening to bring back victors and vanquished to the haven under the hill.

And there was the ball, the Regatta ball, which closed the exciting day, when grey-bearded old gentlemen stood up for the quadrilles; and where their knees were too stiff for dancing, gracefully waved their hands in time to the music. Meanwhile their pretty daughters or nieces waltzed gaily round with the ruddy young squireens of the district, the heroes of the sailing match, or with the quiet young Oxonians of the reading party quartered near, or with young Smith of the Waste-Paper Office, who was taking his holidays down there. And the general public sat upon the window-sills and crowded the doorways, and freely criticised the performance, while the harpist played his best, and the fiddlers plied their elbows vigorously, their powers sustained by generous draughts of champagne. The only interruption to the harmony was when "the Collector," growing uproarious in the bar, insisted on joining the festivities in his shirt-sleeves, and in dancing a "pas seul" down the middle of the well-waxed floor.

Cruising along, the regatta flourishes famously all by the crowded watering-places of the Lancashire coast, and brings its thousands to Morecambe Bay, all fresh from the sweltering regions of the great industries. The Isle of Man, too, has its great popular water festivals; and the Clyde, with its wide reaches, sheltered bays, and far-stretching sea lochs, is just the favoured home of yacht-racing. Indeed, all the western coast and isles of Scotland in favourable summer weather assume the appearance of a vast regatta.

Perhaps the high north latitudes are too seriously engaged in boating to care much about regattas, and for gaiety and show of bunting, of smart costumes and bright aquatic trim, there is Scarborough in the van, although its exposed position militates against any assemblage of sea-going yachts. But Yarmouth has a good roadstead, and Lowestoft a convenient harbour, and for fresh-water sailors there are the charming broads where the spirit of the regatta rules all the summer long.

As the white or whitey-brown cliffs of the French coast come in sight, it is evident that the regatta has caught on there as well, with the attractions added, probably, of a regular rural fête, and plenty of ducking and diving, and tumbling off well-greased spars into the water, for the amusement of the general public. And coming to the mouth of the Seine we shall find Havre perhaps in full excitement over its sailing matches, and higher up the river among white chalk cliffs, and forests, and green prairies, each little riverside town will have its "day of regattas," at one of which we may assist some pleasant Sunday afternoon.

The tide is everything on our river. It comes with a roar and a wall of foaming waters at high springs, but just now there is only a rush and a gentle upheaval, and everybody is ready to start with the very first of the flood. Our especial craft is a stout sailing barge that on ordinary days carries huge boulders of chalk for the embankment. Our skipper hoists his sail, and away we go before wind and tide. Anybody may steer who will—luckily the apothecary is on board, who has served in the marine — he takes the tiller, and the mahogany-coloured skipper retires to his own darksome little den, at the door of which he sits with a fat brown jar of cider between his knees. "Twenty passengers at a franc! Good, I am rich; now shall I drink to each one of them." And he sings and clatters his heels in pure delight at his good fortune. But in the meantime our apothecary has just missed crushing a big black-hulled steamer from Cardiff, that is charged with a thousand tons or so of coal for Rouen, and we all shake our fists at the coaly faces that regard us wonderingly over the taffrail. "Sacrés carbonniers," is the cry, and we agree that our pilot was in his full right in blocking the way for the big Englishman.

Rounding a turn of the river we come in sight of the little port, and of a flotilla lying there all gaily bedecked with streamers, with a background of soft green hills. A stately balustraded terrace looks down on the river, suggesting a courtly group from Versailles as invisible spectators of the scene; but the white balustrade masks only a great field of yellow colza, and salt has been sown on the foundations of the grand old château.

But at this point our apothecary shows signs of nervousness. He is accustomed to the "grande navigation," and not to manœuvring among a cloud of little coasting vessels, and he would gladly resign his charge, but the skipper, overcome by the heat of the day, by the strength of the cider, and by the fatigue of continual choruses, is too fast asleep to be aroused; and so we drive in among the boats, just shaving the barge of the "directors" of the show, and bearing down on a little steam yacht anchored just below.

"N'yez pas peur" we all shout, as we see the yachtsman in full nautical costume, with his wife charmingly dressed, and two children to correspond, taking the air on the deck, and suddenly alarmed at our headlong approach. But except for the fright and the loss of a streak of paint, the yacht and her crew are nothing the worse for the rude contact, and next moment we are brought up by the solid wall of the quay—in an abrupt way that sends the passengers pirouetting about, and gives an opportunity for all the polite phrases at one's command.

On the quay is a grand stand draped with bunting, where the band sits and the magnates of the district, but one sees just as well from one of the great heaps of firewood, from the forest, that are piled here for the supply of the bakers' ovens of the whole department. The regatta has commenced, the starting gun has been fired, and as all the sailing races start at the same moment, a varied spread of canvas is displayed upon the broad and shining river. There are fruit-boats with their scoop-shaped bows, fishing-boats with red sails, barges and river craft of various kinds, and smart yawls belonging to the sailing-club of the district; but with a fresh breeze and good tide these are soon out of sight, and the course is left clear for the amateur four-oared race.

There are four competing boats, and their coxswains are holding on to the rope; the men look pale but determined, stout fellows, but a little too stout perhaps, and their coxswains seem to have been chosen on the principle that he who is too fat to row can at least steer. A gun is fired. Each coxswain shouts and expands his arms as if to fly, the oars dash wildly to and fro; next moment the boats are all mixed together, with oars interlocked in a general entangled foul. What cries arise, what shouts of anger and remonstrance, as the tangled mass floats slowly upwards with the tide! But your Frenchman, if quick in getting into a scrape, is alert in getting out of it, and in less time than it takes to tell the knot is loosened, and the boats strike out in different directions.

And now that the naval business has been despatched, everybody turns to the real enjoyments of the day: the promenade with its cheerful chatter and constant recognitions, the amusements that are provided by the administration, the "mât de cocagne," or greasy pole, and the more modern diversions, in which involuntary shower-baths, electric shocks, and unpleasant surprises of a scientific or mechanical character, produce much hilarity and delight among the spectators of their neighbour's discomfiture.

Then there is a cry, the boats are returning! And here they are, sure enough, one of them many lengths ahead, and the one that has the fattest coxswain of them all, a man in white flannels and in a white heat with toil and excitement. The course was a severe one, round a boat moored a couple of miles up the river, and back again. But the goal is now in sight, and the light of victory glows in that coxswain's eye, as he springs to his feet to pass the flag boat with more éclat. But at that moment there is a shout; another boat, unobserved, had crept along favoured by a strong eddy on the other side of the river, and now shooting across with full force of tide and current, sweeps round and passes the flag boat in the contrary direction. Bang goes the gun for the winner, the band strikes up with martial clangour. The white coxswain who sees victory snatched from his grasp in this treacherous manner is almost beside himself with rage; he jumps upon the thwart, he shouts, he gesticulates, he protests, till his foot slips and he tumbles to the bottom of the boat, saluted with roars of laughter from all around.

There is still plenty of regatta to come as the sailing-boats drift back, at long intervals, deserted by the wind; and there is the distribution of prizes to follow, with fireworks later on, a torchlight procession by the Sapeurs Pompiers of the district, and dancing under the trees in the avenue of the old park, and feasting at the "Hôtel des Pilotes," where the victors treat the vanquished to unlimited choppes, and where the stout coxswain and his treacherous rival are at last persuaded to embrace. And how pleasant after all this is the moonlight walk through shaded lanes, and to see the lights of home shining across the river, where the ferryman waits to row across the last batch of pilgrims from the regatta!

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LVI. DISCOVERED.

With a hideous crash one of the panels of the door gave way, but the rescuing party were forced back for a few moments

by the thick smoke which immediately rolled out upon them. The passage and the doorway of the small door leading into the courtyard were blocked with men, and now, beyond them again, a line of shepherds and miners, who had hastened to the Palace, were seen in a compact mass, drawn there by the mysterious call of "fire" which spreads as quickly as that element itself. In this crush Penelope, still enveloped in her black cloak, kept her stand. One idea filled her brain. She had last seen her father in that room, and she knew how tenaciously he would cling to his treasure. Just before the crash came she found herself near the Duke. He stooped down towards her.

"Penzie, was the King's treasure here? If so—you had better try to save it. When we can get in, follow me. Most likely your father will have retreated up the stairs, if he could not reach the door. I think the origin of the fire must be close by."

There came the call for water, and the first bucketful was passed up to the door when, the first moment of suffocation being over, the men resumed the work of battering down another panel. No one thought of Penelope, save the Duke, and such was the temper of the Winskells that the idea of danger for her was the last to present itself to his mind.

"I must save him," thought Penelope. "I must. He is the King."

The thought of all the sorrow he had brought upon her was swept away, the old feudal feeling reasserted itself with the strong power which those devoid of it cannot understand. To her he was no longer her father—the man who had neglected her in her youth and scorned her in her maidenhood, the mad egotist who had called forth the evil passion and the ignoble scorn in her nature—but the King of Rothery, the descendant of David Winskell, who, by extraordinary courage, had saved the valley from the inroads of the border men.

No one had ever found fault with the courage of the race, and no dalesmen on this night would have wondered at it. To be a Winskell was to be brave.

"Theear, now, cum on," shouted Oldcorn, and three or four of the foremost men rushed in, whilst the others with wild haste handed the buckets of water.

"Noo, my men, we mun battit and thrast at the fire. The door is cummin' down; hodden't it up a lal bit; no stannin' and shootin', but wark. The beem is givin' way ayder side."

Penelope never knew how she managed to get in, but presently she found herself in the large, bare room where so short a time before she had seen her father crouching over the hearth.

"Where is he? Where is he?"

But all the energies of the men were given to putting out the blazing beams. She looked round, but smoke filled her eyes, and only in one corner was there some kind of clear space; but it was not the corner where she had seen the gold secreted. It was there that the fire was raging. The Duke was removing burning wood from the hearth when Penelope joined him.

"Not here, not here, child; but you must take care. Where is the gold? He will be near it."

"Behind you, uncle; but—but if he is not there he may have gone above."

"Ah! go up there, but I will stay here. I hope that—that—— go, child, you may be hurt."

Without further thought Penelope hastened to the further end of the great room into which the stairs descended. No one followed her, for all were engaged in trying to bring the fire under. The first flight of narrow stairs was, strangely enough, moderately free from smoke. On this landing there were three smaller rooms, each lighted by a latticed window. Pausing to gain a little breath, Penelope rushed to one of them and threw it open. She leant out to get some air, feeling that in another moment she would have been stifled, then, without waiting further she looked round the room. There was nothing visible but a few old wooden boxes and oak chests. The great glare from outside illuminated the dark corners, but no King of Rothery lurked in it, so she hurried to the next room. It was smaller, more empty, and it was away from the fire; only the moonlight calmly played its silent games in it. As she stepped over the threshold, however, she trod upon something, and stooping down she picked up a canvas bag.

Her heart beat fast. Was this a sign that her father had been this way, or was it merely some treasure he had dropped upon some former occasion? The vile gold, the hateful gold! In the third room, which was a mere closet, there was nothing to be seen, but there was one more storey, and this was a likely place for a miser. There was one large room among the rafters with a mere skylight high up, and opening from a tiny chamber where apples were usually stored.

Penelope determined to make sure; she must be certain that her father had not gone to seek shelter in that topmost chamber. Her foot was on the ladder-like stairs, when a black smoke pillar rolled slowly up from below, from whence came also a dull cry of astonishment. The flames must have leapt upon some other rafters unnoticed by the crowd, and this was the result.

For a moment the thought came to Penelope that she had better retreat whilst there was yet time, then the old Winskell spirit swept over her. None of the family had ever retreated when a fellow-creature could be rescued, and she would not be the first to do it. She covered her face with her cloak, and stumbled up one more storey to these two rooms among the rafters. On the landing it was dark and stifling. The smoke was still rolling up, and only painfully finding an exit. Still she pressed forward with difficulty. In their childhood, she and her brother had often been up in these old attics to play hide and seek, or to fill their pockets with apples to eat during their walks. She knew every step of the way, but the smoke was choking and blinding her. She knew that only the small room was lighted by a window, and that the other one was shut off by a stout door. Her father must be in the former if he were here at all, but she must see, she must make sure, and then she would go down again.

At the moment when her foot was on the topmost step, she heard a great shout from below, and in the midst of it she recognised her uncle's voice.

"Penelope, Penelope! Come down. You must come—the stairs have caught fire. Come, come at once."

But she was possessed with the idea that her father must be here. The gold she had picked up pointed to his having ascended the stairs, at least as far as the first storey, and since he was not there, he must be up higher.

"I will come in one moment," she tried to say, but the wall of rising smoke seemed to wrap her words up as if in cotton-wool, and to send them back to her. She reached the small room where some apples were lying on the floor; the window was shut, but the room was empty. She flung open the window, and could now breathe more freely. She must hasten back now that this room was empty. Her father could not have gone into the dark inner room, so why waste her precious time in looking for him? But a longing for certainty made her rush to the door and draw the wooden bolts aside. She looked into the great dark chamber, but at first she could see nothing. Then she called out, "Father! father! are you there?" She suddenly remembered how once she had hidden herself there under a heavy sloping beam, in order to frighten her brother, long, long ago when they were children. She felt as if time had gone backward. She was a child again, and she had come to look here for her brother, and must make sure if he were there or not. Why could she not be really a child again, and blot out all this terrible history? Anyhow, she would not let the old man die for want of a little courage.

"Father! father!" she called again, as she resolutely groped her way in.

The smoke had hardly found its way here; the dark garret with its mighty sloping beam was comparatively clear. All at once she stopped short, and a feeling of real terror swept over her. Her call of "Father" was answered by a strange, unearthly groan. Then her heart leapt up in joy. She had found the King, and had saved him from certain death.

"Here I am, father; where—where are you?"

Oh for a light to see into this far corner, for the light from the skylight was too feeble to show her clearly from whence came the groan. She must save him, she must drag him out if necessary, for he must not stay here. There might be only just time to save him, but some one must come and help her. First, however, he must be taken to the other room, where there was air to be breathed. How glad she was that her instinct had drawn her here!

She stumbled onwards, stooping to get under a low beam. He must be lying on the floor, for her foot came against a soft mattress or something like it placed on the floor. She stretched out her arm to feel for him, for he must have fainted.

"Father, rouse yourself. You must come at once. They will save us, but come."

At this instant a flash of firelight seemed to inundate the room. The tiny skylight was surrounded with red flame, and in that moment the dark corner was illuminated. Penelope was looking, trying to pierce the darkness when the light came, and her arms were stretched to help; but suddenly she started up uttering a piercing shriek. The light had illumined, not the features of her father, but the deathly pale face of Philip.

Another flash of light followed. The fire must suddenly have run up on this side

of the turret, and had now reached the woodwork. That was the reason they had called out to her to come down. After that first shriek of horror and surprise Penelope never stopped to think. She did not know, and she never could remember afterwards, how she managed to drag the mattress along the floor, nor how she was able at last, by this means, to convey what she thought was a dead or dying form into the smaller room, shutting the door behind her so as to keep off the fire a little longer. Here there was smoke, but also some air to breathe, and the draught in moments partially cleared the room.

When the deed was accomplished she paused to recover breath and to think. Philip was here, he was not dead, nor had he been murdered by one rash act; but Penelope shuddered at the strange, gaunt face of the man before her, a man who must be at death's door. The truth was not difficult to discover. It was to a slow death by starvation that her father had doomed this man, and his mad cunning had been almost able to accomplish the deed.

She knelt beside him and called him. His eyes were closed, and he was certainly unconscious, for only a strange, low groan was now and then audible.

"Philip! Philip! do you hear me? Answer me!" she called out, in an agony of fear; but then the present danger suddenly drowned all other thoughts. She ran to the head of the stairs and called loudly, but she saw only too plainly that help from that side was an impossibility.

"Help, help! Come and help me!"

From below came louder calls, but the words were deadened by the smoke. She ran down the first flight and shouted again:

"Help, help. We shall die."

Again a shout. She thought she could distinguish her uncle's voice:

"Ladders. Go up, right up. Outside."

Then she knew for a certainty that her escape was cut off, and that her salvation must come from outside. A feeling almost of peace fell upon her. There was no way of escape now, either for her or for Philip, unless indeed help could reach them very soon. If they died they would die together. A great weight seemed suddenly lifted from her mind; now at last she could expiate her crime.

CHAPTER LVII. SAVED AS BY FIRE.

THERE was nothing more she could do now. Her whole mind seemed filled with one idea: Philip was alive. All the strange events which had brought this about were swallowed up in the reality of this fact: Philip was alive, or rather he was not dead. She knelt down beside him, and her terror returned. If he were not dead, he must be on the very threshold of death. Were it not for his fair curly hair she could barely have recognised him, he was so much changed.

Then suddenly a new womanhood seemed to be born in her. She tried to lift his head upon her lap, looking hopelessly round for water, but there was none. There was nothing here but the stored apples, which seemed to be of no use now. She took his poor, thin hands in hers, and for the first time there came into her heart a feeling so new, so strange, that she wondered at it: the feeling of possession with regard to this man. It was not love, not the passion she had felt for Forster, but a feeling of intense pity, such a feeling as a mother often has for some outcast child she has found, and which prompts her to take it home, and to bring it up as her own.

For a few moments her arm was round him and his head rested upon her shoulder, then a fresh stifling cloud of smoke rolled in upon her, and she started up to thrust her head out of the small window. She heard the shouting now, and she could see the crowd gathering below. The ladder was being placed against the wall, but first they were lashing it to another. She took her handkerchief and waved it. There was nothing she could do to help the rescuers. The window was flush with the wall, but some way below and on one side there was a portion of flat roof belonging to the main building. She saw at once that it was from thence the rescue must be effected.

But would they come in time? Would she be able to save him, or must they perish together? Only yesterday life had seemed a thing of no value, but now it suddenly leapt into importance. She must save Philip, and then the awful weight of murder would be lifted from her heart.

Poor Philip! Oh! if he could speak, if—if—Philip had loved her, as she realised with a new feeling of gratitude, now that he seemed beyond the reach of love or hatred. If he were conscious he would like to know that she was by his side, holding him against her, willing, so willing, to save his life at the expense of her own. How strange it was that life had changed so much for her; how strange that at this moment her one joy was that Philip still lived, whilst before——!

But the heat was becoming intense; how soon would it all be over? Was death coming now that she shrank from it? She was still very young to die. She wanted to live; perhaps it was chiefly to be able to tell Forster that she had not killed Philip. No, the past was past; she wanted to live also for Philip's sake. Suppose she had carried out her longing to go with Forster? She suddenly realised what this would have been. She had been preserved from that, and Forster as well as herself had been saved from a doom more terrible than death. Suppose that, the deed accomplished, Philip had come back into their joint lives. She shuddered as she supported the unconscious man. No, God had, at all events, preserved them from that.

"Philip, Philip, if I cannot love you, I —I can make amends," she whispered in her agony of self-reproach. "Philip, can you hear me?"

She started up again, for voices were drawing near. She could hear Oldcorn's shout. She looked out and saw that several men had reached the ledge below her, which stood out from the main building. It was from this place that they were trying to plant the ladder, but the difficulty was that it would only be placed in a sideway position. Penelope dragged an old wooden chest close to the window, and standing on it she leant out of the window as far as she could, watching the efforts of the men. They were on the lead roof now; would they be able to place it near to her before the fire reached her? The night was happily still, and only a very gentle breeze was blowing the flames away from her side, but thin wreaths of smoke came through the floor and twisted themselves into fantastic spiral shapes, trying to escape above the rafters. The floor began to feel hot to the feet, and Penelope entreated them to make haste.

Then the ladder was balanced and it quivered in mid-air. This was followed by a shout of delight as it was seen that the ladder would just reach to the window. Penelope seized it as it was gently steadied in position. She looked round for something with which to secure it; her mind was full of Philip. How could he be got out except a secure foothold was provided for those who must lift him out?

Then she saw that her uncle himself had reached the ledge and was directing the men what to do. A feeling of hope filled her heart. He seemed to be so capable, so calm. Slipping off her long skirt she managed to twist it round the first rung, and thus to secure the ladder to a low beam just below the window.

"Well done!" called out her uncle, and at the same moment Oldcorn nimbly ran up the ladder, which was now held firmly by two men below.

But from behind her a long, cruel tongue of fire shot forth, darting savagely at the old beams.

"Now, Princess," shouted Oldcorn, thrusting his head up, "the fire's varra nar, it's not easy to keep oot the smoke. Mak haste, in case the roof happen ta faw i' t' meentoime."

"Never mind about me, Oldcorn; here is your master, you must save him. Hush! don't say anything, make haste; you must come in and lift him; he is very ill, but you are so strong, you can do it, and I will help you. Call up another man, don't lose a minute."

Oldcorn was so much surprised that he could only murmur a string of strange words before he shouted back for help.

"Lor-a-mussy! How's the poor man to be prop't? To think aw's here in this terrabel big hull and neah body to guess it; but we must hoisen him up, an' if we cud fassen him clean up till a beem on ayder side; but aw's sure and sartin he's taken for death."

All this time Oldcorn had been working hard, the perspiration pouring down his brow, for the heat was becoming unbearable. Tenderly as a woman, the old retainer lifted the emaciated form of Philip in his arms, and with Penelope's help he was placed on the top of the wooden chest.

"There is no time to lose, Oldcorn; make haste. Oh, the heat! But don't think of me, save him. Here is Dodd. Now can he hold him up whilst you get out? Quick! Oh, the flames!"

"This cussin' heat!" muttered Oldcorn, but he certainly wasted no time, for now that another man had appeared he was able to lift Philip gently out of the window, and together they bore him down amidst the shouts of surprise and horror of those below on the leads.

Penelope was left alone. She knew that Oldcorn would come back as soon as possible, and she even got on the chest to see if it were feasible for her to get out without help, but she soon saw that it was not. It was impossible to stand unsupported on the ledge, for the ladder being placed sideways the difficulty was increased tenfold. Then she looked round and noticed another tongue of fire bursting forth from

the partition. Had Philip stayed in that garret, by this time death would have released him from all suffering. She had saved him, she, Penelope, his wife. If only Forster could know that his friend was not dead, but saved from a terrible death by her. But it was she who had brought him to this borderland of death; she had been the instrument of his mental and bodily torture. At this awful moment, the whole history flashed back upon her with extraordinary vividness; her low ideal mocked her, and the vulgar pride of ancestry stood naked before her, burnt out of her for ever! What had she to show of nobility compared with Philip's noble soul? She even remembered that Forster had said that Philip had saved the settlement, not for his own ambition, but to protect his friend's reputation.

But thought stopped. There was a crash, and part of the woodwork gave way, as several sharp tongues of fire seemingly endued with life darted towards Penelope. Her limbs trembled as she crouched closer to the window. The air was stifling, and the smoke began slowly to envelope her. In another minute the flame might reach her, but then she noticed through this blinding veil that the fire had stretched itself upwards, seizing first upon the rafters. She must do something. She lifted herself up on the window-sill, and getting her cloak close round her, she tried to turn, but there was nothing for her hands to grasp, and the heat made her feel faint.

There was a shout; Oldcorn was coming. In a moment more she would be safe, but before that moment came, the beam above her was wrapped with flame, and she felt a scorching breath close to her head. She put her hand up; her hair was on fire. A suppressed cry burst from her lips, but she was still brave, still able to struggle for life. She tore off her cloak and wrapped her head in it, hardly feeling the pain of the fire on one side of her face as the words flashed upon her memory, "saved as by fire."

At that moment Oldcorn seized her and lifted her bodily off the ledge. Her weight was nothing to him, but the fire was stretching out its fiery fingers towards them both. He angrily crushed out the flame that had seized his shirt-sleeve, and then very carefully holding the ladder with one hand and pressing the Princess against him with the other arm, he descended to safety. Here other hands were ready to help, and the Duke, pale as death, stretched out his arms for the niece he had loved as his own child.

Penelope's one moment of fear had paralysed her, and when the Duke laid her on the lead she was unconscious.

"There is not an instant to lose," said the Duke. "Bring them down at once. Look, the tower will fall here. Good Heavens, I fear the whole Palace is doomed. Penzie, Penzie, are you hurt?"

But the Princess could not answer.

Now Publishing,

THE

EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER

CONTAINING

Complete Stories by Popular Writers.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.

On the 12th of SEPTEMBER will be published, price 6d., the

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 296.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

ABSOLUTELY insignificant trifles will sometimes interfere seriously with really important works. To a superior woman, with a mission for the creation of a sphere, the existence of a father suffering from the gout may prove, for the moment, an actual hindrance.

In the slight demoralisation of the household habits involved in Dr. Vallotson's illness, Constance found herself so drawn into the stream of household duties that she had scarcely an hour in the day which she could call her own.

The demand on her services came by no means exclusively from her father. Dr. Vallotson, though he submitted to have the paper read to him by his daughter, and expressed a modified satisfaction in her society, was by no means clamorous for it. But since Dr. Vallotson's illness her mother seemed to have become possessed by an insatiable desire for the girl's society and assistance. The desire was expressed—or rather demonstrated, for it never was put into words—in a hard, matter-of-fact fashion, which concealed the fact that some touch of feverish weakness lay at the bottom of it; perhaps a sense of helplessness arising from the continued uselessness of her left hand; perhaps a more general sense of physical incapacity, induced by the strain of attending to her husband at a time when her accident had left her slightly unstrung. Innumerable little domestic offices were assigned to Constance, which kept her always about the house and in touch with her mother. When Mrs. Vallotson was with her husband, Constance was always summoned to sit with him also. When Mrs. Vallotson was alone, Constance must perforce keep her company.

Constance Vallotson had belonged, at Girton, to a set of young women whose ages ranged between eighteen and three-and-twenty years, and who had mapped out life with great satisfactoriness and completeness in a series of theories. One of these theories held that it was beneath the dignity of a truly superior woman to allow herself to be disturbed or annoyed by anything that might befall her. Consequently it is obvious that the expression which developed upon Constance's face, and the angle which became habitual to her chin during the days of Dr. Vallotson's martyrdom, can have had nothing to do with such inferior emotions as impatience and irritability.

And yet, as she pushed open the door of her own room on the fourth afternoon, it might have been said by a superficial observer that Constance Vallotson looked distinctly cross. She had just retreated, lunch being over, with a haste and secrecy which were not compatible with dignity, and her consciousness of the fact was ruffling. She had spent the whole morning looking over household linen with her mother; and she had in her pocket a long, earnest letter from a Girton friend, full of lofty views and intellectual depths, and burning with anxiety as to the effect already produced on Alnchester by the presence of "an enlightened mind."

To answer this letter, to expatiate on the field before her, and to theorise loftily on the momentary hindrances about her, would

be a task—as Constance felt—calculated to restore her to the enjoyment of that lofty disdain which was her normal attitude of mind. She shut the door of her room, sat down at her writing-table, and prepared to refresh herself accordingly.

She had finished the third closely-written sheet, and a lofty calm was settling upon her features, when the door behind her opened abruptly. The calm disappeared as if by magic before a frank, unrestrained, girlish irritability, and Constance turned, absolutely petulantly. The intruder was Mrs. Vallotson, and as the girl became aware of the fact her expression changed again. Her temper, like her supercilious self-assurance, was dominated by her mother's personality.

"There you are, child," said Mrs. Vallotson briefly. "Your father wants you to read to him."

"Has North been to him yet, mother?"

Dr. Vallotson exacted of North Branston a midday professional visit and report as to the practice, at which Constance's presence was not desired. He had not as yet come in from his morning's round, and Constance's question contained the possibility of a reprieve for her.

Almost as she finished speaking, Mrs. Vallotson, who had been standing with her hand on the door, pushed it open and stood for a moment listening intently to sounds in the hall below.

"No," she said harshly and hurriedly; "there he is now. Come down in about half an hour, Constance."

Before the girl could answer, Mrs. Vallotson had shut the door upon her and was going swiftly downstairs. Her face had lost nothing of its new haggardness in the course of the last three or four days. On the contrary, that drawn set of her features seemed to be sharpened by an air of intense, restless vitality which seemed to pervade her. As she passed, quick and resolute, along the passage to Dr. Vallotson's study, her lips were parted with a curious suggestion of breathlessness, and there was a slight grey shade about them. She seemed to make a strange point of being present during North's visits to her husband. The fact had been noticeable during each of the preceding days. And now, as she opened the door of Dr. Vallotson's study and glanced round the room, though only a minute or two had elapsed since she heard North Branston enter the house, she said quickly:

"Has North been in?"

Dr. Vallotson, the solitary occupant of the room, looked up with his face puckered into a suppressed testiness.

"No," he said. "No, he has not. Has he come in? It's getting very late."

"He's having lunch, I suppose," said Mrs. Vallotson. "He came in just now."

She crossed the room as she spoke and began, with her uninjured hand, to sort and put tidy a miscellaneous collection of books and newspapers which lay on a table. Her movements were very quick and tense.

"He is very late," repeated Dr. Vallotson fussily. "I cannot think what should have kept him. Let me see, now, what has he for this afternoon? There's old Bronson—he must certainly be seen—and Mrs. Jones. I think that's all."

North Branston's day's work, as far as Dr. Vallotson's consideration of it was concerned, consisted solely of those half-dozen cases which, had his health permitted, the latter gentleman would have taken himself; cases, for the most part, consisting of old inhabitants of Alnchester who suffered principally from hypochondria, and who enjoyed a gossip with a doctor. Neither of the cases to which Dr. Vallotson had alluded by name was of a more serious nature, and there was nothing whatever to disturb him in connection with them. And yet as Dr. Vallotson said the last words he fidgeted, moved his gouty foot testily, and groaned. Then he leaned back in his chair and drummed hesitatingly on its arm.

"There's Hatherleigh!" he said. "Now, I wonder—I wonder whether Sir William Karslake will be expecting me?"

He seemed to be half thinking aloud, half putting out a feeler—after the manner of weak men—towards some help in coming to a decision on a question he was reluctant to answer. Mrs. Vallotson was doing her work steadily and neatly, in spite of her crippled condition, but it evidently exacted all her attention, for she did not turn round or answer on the instant, and Dr. Vallotson continued. The almost unprecedented discussion with his wife on the subject of the Karslakes was practically forgotten by him. That is to say, the question which he had argued with temper due to oncoming gout had become a matter of indifference to him, since it affected his comfort of the moment not at all; and he was considerably exercised by the question which was disturbing his mind at this moment, and needed the relief of words.

"Four days it is, isn't it, since I was

there?" he said, cogitating with evident reluctance. "Well, I don't know—perhaps North had better—and yet I don't feel sure that Sir William would like it. What—now, what should you advise, my dear?"

His tone was eloquent of desire that Sir William should not like it. He was evidently torn between the desire of keeping the new patient to himself, and the fear lest Sir William Karslake should feel himself neglected. Against the tentative weakness and jealousy of his self-important tones, his wife's voice, as she answered him, seemed to ring with extraordinarily harsh decision.

"You will be able to go yourself in a day or two," she said. "North has quite patients enough."

The words implied no consideration for North Branston's time; they rather answered to the note of jealousy in Dr. Vallotson's tone. And as she finished speaking, North himself entered the room.

As though his wife's tone had been by no means without effect upon him, Dr. Vallotson received the younger man rather cavalierly. A sharp cross-examination ensued as to the morning's work—in which all North's own patients were ignored—to which North Branston submitted with dry indifference.

The morning being disposed of, and a momentary pause following, North turned to Mrs. Vallotson. She stood by the window with her back to the two men, silent and still.

"Adelaide," he said, "I had better look at your hand now."

The condition of Mrs. Vallotson's wounded hand had improved gradually during the last few days, but it still required medical attention. Dr. Vallotson found that his own suffering did not allow him to look to it properly, so that North had to supply his place.

He had spoken in a cold, business-like tone, and for an instant she took no notice; then she turned slowly, and held out her hand, still without turning her eyes towards him as he came towards her. A more reluctant doctor and patient it would have been impossible to imagine.

He unrolled the bandages in silence with deft fingers, and then, as though the constraint of the position affected him in spite of himself, he glanced round to Dr. Vallotson and said:

"Where can I go for you this afternoon?"

The needs of old Mr. Bronson and of Mrs. Jones were laid before him with pompous minuteness, and as Dr. Vallotson finished his instructions North said briefly:

"What about Hatherleigh Grange?" He paused and glanced up at Mrs. Vallotson. "Did I hurt you, Adelaide?" Then, as she made no answer, he continued: "Is there any need to go there?"

Dr. Vallotson's answer was sharp-toned and decisive in proportion to his previous uncertainty.

"Certainly not!" he said. "I shall go there myself in a day or two! You'll have quite enough to do to get through your afternoon's work, as it is."

North made the slightest possible gesture of acquiescence.

"As you like!" he said. "That's finished, Adelaide. There's nothing more, then?"

And a moment later he had left the room.

Dr. Vallotson's words as to North Branston's afternoon's work, little as their speaker realised the facts of the case, were perfectly true. Old Mr. Bronson and Mrs. Jones found themselves disposed of in about seven minutes each; and their subsequent strictures to their respective families on Dr. Branston and all his ways and works were far from complimentary. Nevertheless, four hours, and four very hard-working hours, had elapsed before North Branston reached his home again.

A day's work such as North had accomplished is calculated to produce fatigue enough to temper the geniality of the most genial of men. It was the night of his dinner engagement with Archdeacon French, and North Branston's face as he entered the Archdeacon's drawing-room, tired as it was, was also at its most cynical and impassive.

Archdeacon French was a childless man. His family consisted of his wife, a delicate little woman, who looked older than he did. If Mrs. French was inclined to share the popular view of North Branston, rather than that held by her husband, the fact evinced itself only in a slight touch of stately elaboration, in the charming manner with which she invariably welcomed her guests; and her manner chimed absolutely harmoniously with her husband's greeting. Archdeacon French was not a demonstrative host. He received North with a tacit

assurance of pleasure which carried more weight than many words, and with a hand-clasp such as the young man had not met all day — often as his hand had been touched and shaken.

"Only ourselves, as I told you, Branston!" he said, as the gong sounded. "Take in my wife, will you?"

The conversation that ensued during dinner would have seemed to Alnchester, could it have been overheard, almost scandalising. None of the affairs of local importance; none of those topics of the moment which should naturally have come under discussion between three good citizens; neither the Bishop's bronchitis, the conduct of the Dean's eldest son, nor the imperfect lighting of the High Street, was so much as mentioned. The talk, led by the host, started with a question of European importance, and passed thence to a recent discovery which was exercising the scientific world. Archdeacon French was a good talker, and during the early part of dinner—after one shrewd glance at the grim fatigue written on his guest's face—he practically sustained the conversation. But by degrees his remarks became less complete and more suggestive; and before dinner was over, North Branston was commenting, answering, questioning, with an interest wholly at variance with his usually indifferent demeanour.

"We'll go into the library," said the Archdeacon, coffee and cigars being finished. "My wife is not good for much to-night, and I told her we would not disturb her."

The arrangement was a familiar one to Archdeacon French's guests. North followed him into a comfortable book-lined room at the back of the house, and in response to an invitation to establish himself comfortably, flung himself into an easy-chair. His face had altered marvellously since his entrance into the house; its stern passivity had left it, and it was full of keen life and thought; even the cynicism about the mouth and eyes was no longer indifferent but keenly sentient, as though its resources had been called into play. Archdeacon French established himself in an arm-chair facing him, and continued the discussion which their move had broken off.

"I don't agree with you, Branston," he said; "and I should like to convince you! The question itself is no great matter, and we are not called upon to decide it, in any case. But there seem to me to be principles behind!"

"So far we are quite at one," responded North Branston quickly, and though his tone was a little sardonic it was by no means hard. "But when we get to the principles themselves——"

"We part company?" said the elder man.

He was looking thoughtfully into the fire, and there was a touch of sadness in his voice.

"Have you no faith in the perfectibility of the race, Branston?"

There was a moment's pause, and then North Branston raised his hand and let it fall heavily upon the arm of his chair.

"None!" he said. "I see tendency in that direction, I see no means by which it may be brought about."

The words were spoken deliberately and heavily. They were a curiously direct confession of faith, and the manner of their utterance testified strikingly to the nature of the talk which had preceded them. Some men may talk for hours on intimate personal matters, and never for an instant get into touch each with the other; never reveal themselves as they are. Between others, on the contrary, a discussion of the most abstract subject will establish lines of communication by which the reality in each of the disputants is conveyed to the other insensibly, involuntarily. North Branston and his host had been discussing an educational question; nothing personal had been said on either side; but into the conversation from the first, emanating originally from Archdeacon French, and responded to in absolute unconsciousness by North, there had crept that subtle something which is most inadequately described as sympathy; and the final issue as contained in North's final words seemed neither strange nor unexpected.

North Branston's words were succeeded by a silence. The speaker sat gazing into the fire, his eyes full of sombre thought; he looked as though, with that acceptance of a stern fact to which his words had witnessed, the smaller spirit of contempt was merged for the moment in something greater. Archdeacon French was also looking at the fire; there was a deep pity in his eyes and there was a question in them, too. It was he who broke the silence. He changed his position, like a man who introduces a fresh topic of conversation, and glanced up at North Branston's face with a kindly observance, as he said:

"I heard of you, Branston, the other day

from a brother-in-law of mine in London; Slade-Fenton, you know?"

North moved and shook off something of his gravity in deference to the Archdeacon's change of tone, as he made a ready gesture of acquiescence.

"I knew Dr. Slade-Fenton was a connexion of yours!" he said. He paused, and that wider and deeper expression which lingered in his face gradually subsided. "What had Dr. Slade-Fenton to say about me, may I ask?" he said.

Archdeacon French crossed his legs and looked back again at the fire.

"He has a voice in the appointments at your old hospital," he said. "You had not heard of that, perhaps? It's a new thing? And he wrote to me of his regret that you had refused an offer made you in connection with the hospital a week or so ago!"

Archdeacon French did not look at his guest. Apparently a shrewd delicacy of tact prevented it. But he was keenly conscious of the change in North Branston's face during the moment's pause that followed, and the tone in which his answer came was no surprise to him.

"Dr. Slade-Fenton has always been my good friend!"

The words were formal, almost curt, and North's voice as he spoke them had a bitterly sardonic ring. Archdeacon French ignored alike the tone of the words and the pause that had preceded them.

"Yes," he said. "He has the highest respect for your powers, if I may tell you so. Some part of his regret was selfish, inasmuch as, identifying himself with the place, he felt it would have been very greatly to his advantage that you should have accepted. But he regretted it also on your account. It was a very important appointment, he tells me."

There was a very delicate and sympathetic invitation about the words, and about the tact which still refrained from looking at the young man. But there was a ring of hard reserve about North's voice as he answered briefly:

"Yes."

Archdeacon French moved. He turned towards North and let his eyes rest on the younger man's face.

"And the refusal was quite inevitable?" he said.

North made a gesture of cynical indifference.

"I suppose so," he said.

For a moment longer Archdeacon French looked at him. Then, as if recognising the barrier which the other had deliberately raised in place of the sympathetic communion of a little while before, he turned away with a slight gesture—involuntary as it seemed—of tacit sympathy and regret, and began to speak of something else.

He began to speak, but his first words were interrupted. A servant entered the room and came up to North Branston.

"A note for you, if you please, sir. And there's a dog-cart waiting."

With a quick word of apology North opened and read the note, and then turned to his host.

"I must go, unfortunately!" he said. "The note is sent on by Dr. Vallotson, and it is urgent. Good night and many thanks."

"Good night," returned the Archdeacon; he held out his hand cordially as he spoke. "I am the loser! You've not a long drive before you, I hope?"

"Three miles," answered North carelessly. "It is to Hatherleigh Grange—the new man there, Sir William Karslake. Do you know him?"

They were at the hall-door by this time, and a moment later North Branston had swung himself into the dog-cart and was being driven rapidly through the town. He took out the note he had received and read it through again with a keen professional face; read also the notes with which Dr. Vallotson had supplemented it.

Then he spoke to the groom who was driving him.

"Stop at Dr. Vallotson's as you pass," he said. "Here it is!"

The man touched his hat and obeyed, and North jumped down and went quickly into the house, along the passage, and into his own room. He chose out the drugs he had come to seek, and left the room again.

He had just shut the door of the room behind him when the door of the drawing-room opened suddenly, and Mrs. Vallotson came out. She saw him on the instant; they were indeed almost face to face; and she stopped short.

She had been moving abruptly, almost violently, and the absolute dead stillness to which her movements gave place produced, in its extraordinary contrast, a very strange effect. For a moment, influenced by it in spite of himself, North also stood motionless confronting her. The light of the hall lamp shone full on him, while she stood in shadow; he could only dimly see her face, but it struck him

gradually that it was quite white. She did not move, but stood there with her eyes fixed upon him.

"Is anything the matter, Adelaide?"

The words came from him almost involuntarily, and they were followed by an instant's dead pause. Then to his great surprise Mrs. Vallotson, still with her eyes fixed on him, broke into a low, harsh laugh.

"No," she said, in an odd, hoarse voice. "No, of course not. You are going to Hatherleigh Grange, are you not? Why don't you go?"

"I thought you wanted me," he said curtly. "Good night."

There was no answer. He strode down the passage and out of the house without looking back.

CHICAGO IN ITS INFANCY.

I. INCIDENTS AND FOREBODINGS.

THE City of Chicago has figured prominently in American history during the last eighty years. When some of us were children it was a mere trading-post, having few inhabitants. It is now one of the largest cities in the United States. It is finely situated on the south-west shore of Lake Michigan, being divided into three parts by the two mouths of the river from which it takes its name. It is in many respects a great city. It is a great railway centre; it has a vast commerce, both by sea and land; it has immense granaries, prodigious manufactories, and the docks for shipping extend for miles. It has been the scene of great disasters; and, while we write, is the scene of insane strikes and riots which are a disgrace to civilisation. Notwithstanding these things, however, the city contains many noble institutions, many thousands of loyal and highly respectable citizens, among whom are men and women of the highest attainments in literature, science, and all that is noble and good.

One of the many disasters which have befallen the place took place as far back as 1812. Chicago—or, as it was oftener called, Fort Dearborn—was then a remote outpost on the western limit of civilisation. It could not be called a settlement, for the only inhabitants, outside the garrison, were a few Canadians and the family of a gentleman, Mr. Kinzie, engaged in the fur trade. He was a great favourite among the Indians, who called him Shawne-au-kee, and the "Silverman," on account of his furnishing them with rings, brooches, and other silver ornaments.

The fort at Chicago was constructed with two block-houses on the southern side, and a subterranean passage to the river was intended as a means of supplying the garrison with water during a siege, or to serve as a sallyport. The garrison consisted of seventy-five men, not all available for service, officered by young men, all being under the command of Captain Heald.

Mrs. Rebecca Heald was a daughter of Colonel Wells, and her early years were spent with her uncle, Captain William Wells, who was Indian agent at Fort Wayne. Captain Wells had a romantic history. When quite young he was taken captive by the Miami Indians; adopted by the chief, Little Turtle; and trained to be a warrior. He subsequently left them and joined the Americans, but afterwards returned to the Indians, and finally filled the post mentioned above. It was at Fort Wayne that Captain Heald made the acquaintance of Miss Wells; and upon their marriage, her home was at Fort Dearborn, Chicago.

The garrison at Fort Dearborn maintained a constant and friendly intercourse with the Indians in the neighbourhood; and, as the principal chiefs seemed to be on amicable terms with the Americans, no danger was apprehended from them. The peninsula now forming the State of Michigan was then a wilderness, peopled only by savages; and intercourse between Chicago, Fort Wayne, and Detroit, was carried on by hardy travellers, who traversed the two hundred and seventy-eight miles of country amid many hardships and dangers.

It was now on the eve of the war between Great Britain and America, and a feeling of alarm and apprehension pervaded the settlers and others on the western and Canadian frontiers. The garrison at Dearborn, however, did not share these fears, trusting in the manifest friendliness of the Indians. But their confidence was misplaced, though some remained true to them.

The first alarm was given on the evening of the seventh of April, 1812.

Near the junction of the Chicago river with Lake Michigan, and directly opposite the fort, from which it was separated by the river and a few rods of sloping green turf, stood the dwelling-house and trading establishment of Mr. Kinzie. This gentleman was at home, playing the violin for

the amusement of his children, who were dancing merrily around him. Mrs. Kinzie had gone a short distance up the river to visit a sick neighbour named Burns, and she was expected to return shortly. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Kinzie rushed in.

"The Indians! the Indians!" she cried. "They are up at Lee's place killing and scalping."

"Lee's place" was a farm intersected by the river about four miles up. As soon as Mrs. Kinzie recovered sufficiently, she informed her husband that while she was at Burns's Place a man and a boy were seen running on the opposite side of the river. They called across to Burns to save himself and his family, as the Indians were at Lee's place, from which they had just escaped, and were making their way to the fort.

All was consternation now, but not to the exclusion of remedial measures. Burns and his family were hurried into two old canoes and paddled across the river to the fort, whither the man—a discharged soldier—and the boy had already come, and had told their story.

They related that, in the afternoon, a party of ten or twelve Indians, dressed and painted, had arrived at the house, and, according to the custom with the savages, had entered and seated themselves without ceremony. Something in their appearance had excited the suspicion of one of the family—a Frenchman—who observed: "I do not like the looks of these Indians; they are none of our folks. I know by their dress and paint that they are not Pottowattamies."

The soldier then bade the boy follow him, and they walked leisurely towards two canoes tied near the bank. Some of the Indians demanded where they were going. They pointed to the cattle standing among the haystacks on the opposite bank, and made signs that they must go and fodder them. When they had gained the other side of the river they pulled some hay for the cattle, and made a show of collecting them, when they gradually made a circuit, took to the woods, and so made for the fort. They had run about a quarter of a mile when they heard two guns fired; they then warned Burns's people, as we have related, and they were rescued by a party of six soldiers sent from the fort, Mrs. Burns and her infant, who was little more than a day old, being carried on their bed to the boat and conveyed with the rest to the fort.

The same afternoon a corporal and six soldiers had gone up the river to fish. Fearing they might encounter the savages, Captain Heald ordered a cannon to be fired to warn them of danger. On hearing the signal they put out their torches and dropped down the river in silence. When they reached "Lee's place" they stopped to put the inmates on their guard. All was still around the house, and as they groped their way through the darkness, and the corporal leaped the fence, they came upon the dead body of a man who had been scalped. His faithful dog stood guarding the lifeless remains. The soldiers at once made their way to the fort. The next morning an examination of the premises revealed two dead bodies. The perpetrators of these murders, it was afterwards ascertained, were a party of Winnibagoes, who had come with the determination to kill every white man, but had retreated on hearing the report of the cannon.

The inhabitants of the place included, besides those mentioned, a few discharged soldiers and some families of half-breeds. These now entrenched themselves in the "Agency House," a log building standing near the fort. The piazzas front and back were planked up, and port-holes cut, where sentinels were posted at night.

The above occurrences kept the inmates of the fort in a state of apprehension for some time, but weeks passed without any further incident.

In the afternoon of the seventh of August following, a Pottowattamie chief arrived at the fort with despatches from General Hull at Detroit, announcing the declaration of war between the United States and Great Britain, and that the island of Mackinaw had fallen into the hands of the British. Captain Heald was ordered to evacuate the post, if practicable, and in that event to distribute all the United States property at the Factory or Agency, and also the provisions and ammunition stored in the fort, among the Indians in the neighbourhood.

After delivering his despatches, the chief, Winnimeg, requested a private interview with Mr. Kinzie, who had taken up his abode at the garrison. He stated that he was acquainted with the purport of the despatches, and earnestly advised that the fort should not be evacuated, as the garrison was well supplied with ammunition and provisions for six months. He said it would be better to remain until reinforce-

ments could be sent to their assistance. In case, however, Captain Heald should decide on leaving the fort, it should be done immediately, as the Pottowattamies, through whose country they must pass, were ignorant of the object of his mission, and a forced march might be made before the hostile Indians were prepared to intercept them.

This sensible and friendly advice Captain Heald was not willing to act upon. He thought it was his duty to obey strictly the orders sent him. He said he should collect all the Indians in the neighbourhood, and make an equitable distribution of the stores and other property. Winnimeg urged that, if he must evacuate the post, it would be better to march out and leave everything standing; since, while the Indians were dividing the spoils, the troops might possibly effect their retreat in safety.

This counsel, also, though seconded by the subordinate officers, was not approved by the Commander, and he issued his orders for the evacuation of the fort. Once more the officers waited on him, and urged that they should remain and fortify themselves as strongly as possible, in hopes that reinforcements would reach them before they could be attacked by the British from Mackinaw. But Captain Heald persisted in his plan, alleging that the distribution of the valuable property would conciliate the Indians, and induce them, upon the promise of a further reward, to escort them to Fort Wayne. The project was manifestly an unwise, if not a mad one, and great dissatisfaction prevailed among the officers and soldiers.

Meanwhile the Indians became every day more unruly, entering the fort in defiance of the sentinels, and often making their way to the officers' quarters. One of them had the audacity to take up a rifle and discharge it in the parlour of the Commandant's wife. This was thought to be a signal for a general attack, as there was vehement agitation among the Indians; but the storm had not yet fully gathered.

On the twelfth of August, the Indians from the neighbouring villages being assembled, a council was held with them, Captain Heald alone attending on the part of the military, as his officers refused to accompany him. Information had been brought to them secretly that it was the intention of the young chiefs to fall upon and murder them while in council. Captain Heald could not be persuaded of the truth of this, and therefore ventured alone, while the officers who remained took command of the block-houses, which overlooked the esplanade on which the council was held, opening the port-holes and pointing the cannon so as to command the whole assembly.

In the council Captain Heald informed the Indians that it was his intention to distribute among them, the next day, all the goods, provisions, and ammunition which the Agency and garrison contained. He then requested of the Pottowattamies an escort to Fort Wayne, with the promise of a liberal reward. With many professions of friendship and goodwill they assented to all he proposed, and promised all he required.

After the council Mr. Kinzie, who understood the Indian character and the feeling prevalent among them, represented to the Commandant the gross impolicy of furnishing the Indians with arms and ammunition, which would surely be used against them or the defenceless settlers. Struck with the force of this reasoning, Captain Heald determined to destroy all the ammunition not necessary for his own men.

On the thirteenth the goods, consisting of blankets, broadcloth, calicoes, prints, etc., were distributed according to promise; but in the evening the ammunition was carried into the sally-port and thrown into a well, together with bags of shot, flints, gunscrews, and the muskets not needed for the march. All the barrels of liquor, too, had their heads knocked in, and the contents poured into the river.

The next day Captain Wells arrived with fifteen friendly Miami Indians. He had heard at Fort Wayne of the order for evacuating Fort Dearborn, and knowing the hostile determination of the Pottowattamies, had made a rapid march across the country to prevent the exposure of Captain Heald and the garrison to certain destruction. But it was too late. The ammunition had been destroyed and the provisions given to the Indians.

Among the Indian chiefs were several who, while they shared the general hostile feeling of their tribes towards the Americans, retained a personal regard for the troops and the few white citizens at Fort Dearborn, or Chicago. These exerted all their influence to allay the revengeful feelings of the younger men, and to avert their sanguinary designs, but without effect.

No doubt, speaking generally, the Indians had received great provocation from the Americans, whom they regarded as robbers,

wresting from them their hunting-grounds; and in not a few cases great cruelties had been inflicted on them; but, on the other hand, many of the settlers had been kind to them, and even some of the military had laid them under obligations by their generosity. The recipients of these favours were not insensible to feelings of gratitude, and some of them had a fine sense of honour not always found among people of a higher civilisation. One case in point may be given.

On the evening succeeding the last council, a conspicuous chief, Black Partridge by name, entered the quarters of the commanding officer.

"Father," said he, "I come to deliver up to you the medal I wear. It was given me by the Americans, and I have long worn it in token of our mutual friendship. But our young men are resolved to imbrue their hands in the blood of the whites. I cannot restrain them, and I will not wear a token of peace while I am compelled to act as an enemy."

This circumstance should have been sufficient to fully open the eyes of Captain Heald, and to prove to him the folly of his confidence in the Indians. But it was too late to retrace his steps.

II. THE MASSACRE.

The morning of the fifteenth arrived. All things were in readiness, and nine o'clock was the hour fixed for starting. Mr. Kinzie had volunteered to accompany the troops on their march, and had confided his family to the care of some friendly Indians, who had promised to convey them in a boat round the head of Lake Michigan to a point on the St. Joseph's river, now called Bertrand; there to join the troops, should they be permitted to continue their march.

Early in the morning Mr. Kinzie received a message from a friendly chief, informing him that mischief was intended by the Pottowattamies who had engaged to escort the garrison, and urging him to relinquish his design of accompanying the troops by land, promising that the boat which should contain himself and family should be permitted to pass in safety to St. Joseph's. Mr. Kinzie declined to accept this proposal, believing that his presence might operate as a restraint on the fury of the savages, as he knew the greater part of them were warmly attached to himself and his family.

The party in the boat consisted of Mrs. Kinzie and her four children, a clerk, two servants, and the boatmen, besides the two Indians who acted as their protectors. The boat had scarcely reached the mouth of the river when another messenger from the chief arrived to detain them.

As the troops left the fort the band struck up the "Dead March." They passed on in military order, Captain Wells at the head of his little band of Miamies taking the lead, his face blackened with wetted powder, partly in defiance of the Indians, and partly in token of the fate which he believed awaited him. They took their route along the shore of the lake; but when they reached the point where commences the range of sand-hills between the prairie and the beach, the escort of Pottowattamies, in number about five hundred, kept the level of the prairie instead of continuing along the beach with the Americans and Miamies. They had not marched more than a mile and a half when Captain Wells, who was somewhat in advance with his Miamies, came back, riding furiously.

"They are about to attack us," shouted he; "form instantly, and charge upon them."

Scarcely were the words uttered when a volley was showered from among the sand-hills. The troops were hastily brought into line, and charged up the bank. One man, a veteran of seventy years, fell as they ascended. The troops charged manfully, but what hope was there for them, as the Indians were at least ten to one? The conflict was a terrible one. But it will be best given in the words of an eye-witness—Mrs. Helm, the wife of Lieutenant Helm, a stepdaughter of Mr. Kinzie.

"After we had left the shore and gained the prairie, the action became general. The Miamies fled at the outset. Their chief rode up to the Pottowattamies, and said: 'You have deceived the Americans and us; you have done a bad action, and,' brandishing his tomahawk, 'I will be the first to head a party of Americans, and return to punish your treachery.' So saying, he galloped after his companions, who were now scouring across the prairies.

"The troops behaved most gallantly. They were but a handful, but they resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Our horses pranced and bounded, and could hardly be restrained, as the balls whistled among them. I drew off a little, and gazed upon my husband and father, who were yet

unharmed. I felt that my hour was come, and endeavoured to forget those I loved, and prepare myself for my approaching fate.

"While I was thus engaged the surgeon came up. He was badly wounded. His horse had been shot under him, and he had received a ball in his leg. Every muscle of his countenance was quivering with the agony of terror. He said to me, 'Do you think they will take our lives? I am badly wounded, but I think not mortally. Perhaps we might purchase our lives by promising them a large reward. Do you think there is any chance?'

"'Doctor,' said I, 'do not let us waste the few moments that yet remain to us in such vain hopes. Our fate is inevitable. In a few moments we must appear before the bar of Heaven. Let us endeavour to make what preparation is yet in our power.' I pointed to Ensign Ronan, who, though mortally wounded and nearly down, was still fighting with desperation upon one knee.

"'Look at that man,' said I; 'he at least dies like a soldier!'

"'Yes,' replied the unfortunate man, with a convulsive gasp, 'but he has no terrors for the future—he is an unbeliever!'

"At this moment a young Indian raised his tomahawk at me. By springing aside I avoided the blow, which was intended for my skull, but which alighted on my shoulder. I seized him round the neck, and while exerting my utmost efforts to get possession of his scalping-knife, which hung in a scabbard over his breast, I was dragged from his grasp by an older Indian, who bore me, struggling and resisting, towards the lake. Notwithstanding the rapidity with which I was hurried along, I recognised, as I passed them, the lifeless remains of the unfortunate surgeon. Some murderous tomahawk had stretched him upon the very spot where I had last seen him.

"I was immediately plunged into the water and held there with a forcible hand, notwithstanding my resistance. I soon perceived, however, that the object of my captor was not to drown me, as he held me firmly in such a position as to keep my head above the water. This reassured me, and regarding him attentively, I soon recognised, in spite of the paint with which he was disguised, the Black Partridge.

"When the firing had somewhat subsided, my preserver bore me from the water and conducted me up the sandbanks. It was a burning August morning, and walking through the sand in my drenched condition was inexpressibly painful and fatiguing. I stooped and took off my shoes to free them from the sand with which they were nearly filled, when a squaw seized and carried them off, and I was obliged to proceed without them. When we had gained the prairie, I was met by my father, who told me that my husband was safe, and but slightly wounded. They led me gently back towards the Chicago river, along the southern bank of which was the Pottowattamie encampment. At one time I was placed on a horse without a saddle, but soon finding the motion unsupportable, I sprang off. Supported partly by my kind conductor, and partly by another Indian, who held dangling in his hand the scalp of Captain Wells, I dragged my fainting steps to one of the wigwams.

"The wife of a chief from the Illinois river was standing near, and seeing my exhausted condition, she seized a kettle, dipped up some water from a little stream that flowed near, threw into it some maple sugar, and stirring it up with her hand, gave it me to drink. This act of kindness, in the midst of so many atrocities, touched me most sensibly. But my attention was soon diverted to other objects." An old squaw, infuriated by the loss of friends, or excited by the sanguinary scenes around her, seemed possessed with a demoniacal fury. She seized a stable-fork, and assaulted one miserable victim who lay groaning and writhing in great agony from his wounds, aggravated by the scorching beams of the sun. But with a delicacy of feeling hardly to be expected amid such surroundings, "Black Partridge" stretched a mat across two poles between Mrs. Helm and this dreadful scene. The following night five more of the wounded were tomahawked.

The heroic resolution of the wife of one of the soldiers deserves to be recorded. She had from the first expressed a determination never to fall alive into the hands of the savages, believing that their prisoners were subjected to a torture worse than death. When therefore a party came upon her to take her prisoner, she fought with desperation, refusing to surrender, although assured of safe treatment, and suffered herself to be cut to pieces rather than become their captive.

The horse ridden by Mrs. Heald was a fine animal, and the Indians sought to possess themselves of it uninjured. They therefore aimed their shots so as to disable

the rider, without wounding her steed. This they at length accomplished, and her captor was in the act of removing her hat from her head, in order to scalp her, when a half-breed from St. Joseph's, named Chandonnai, ran up and offered a mule he had just taken for her ransom, adding a promise of ten bottles of whisky when he reached his village. The latter was a strong temptation.

"But," said the Indian, "she is badly wounded—she will die. Will you give me the whisky at all events?"

Chandonnai promised that he would, and the bargain was concluded. Mrs. Heald was placed in the boat with Mrs. Kinzie and her children, covered with a buffalo robe, and enjoined silence as she valued her life. In this situation she remained, without uttering a sound that could betray her to the savages, who repeatedly came to the boat in search of prisoners, but who always retired peaceably when told that it contained only the family of Shaw-ne-au-kee (Mr. Kinzie).

From the Pottowattamie encampment the family of Mr. Kinzie were conveyed across the river to their own house, where they were closely guarded by their Indian friends. The rest of the prisoners remained in the wigwams of their captors.

The following morning, when the work of plunder had been completed, the Indians set fire to the fort. They had previously distributed among themselves the shawls, ribbons, feathers, and such finery as they could lay their hands on. One young Indian had arrayed himself in a muslin dress and the bonnet of Captain Heald's lady.

At Mr. Kinzie's house Black Partridge and Wau-ban-see, with three others, established themselves in the porch as sentinels, to protect the family and other inmates.

Very soon a party of Indians from the Wabash made their appearance. They were the most hostile and implacable of all the bands of the Pottowattamies, and knew less of the kindness of Mr. Kinzie than those who lived nearer. They were annoyed when they learned that the battle was over, and the scalps all taken.

On their arrival at Chicago, they blackened their faces, and proceeded towards the residence of Mr. Kinzie. From his station on the piazza, Black Partridge had watched their approach, and his fears were awakened for the safety of Mrs. Helm, who was personally unknown to these Indians. By his advice she assumed the ordinary dress of a Frenchwoman of the country—a short gown and petticoat, with a blue cotton handkerchief wrapped around her head—and in this disguise he conducted her to the house of a Frenchman named Ouilmette, who, with his half-breed wife, formed part of the establishment of Mr. Kinzie, and lived near him. It happened that the Indians came first to Ouilmette's house in search of prisoners. As they approached, the inmates, fearful that the fair complexion and general appearance of Mrs. Helm might betray her for an American, raised the large feather bed and placed her under the edge of it, with her face towards the wall. Mrs. Bisson, the sister of Ouilmette's wife, then seated herself with her sewing upon the front of the bed. It was a hot day, and the feverish excitement of fear and agitation, together with her position, which was nearly suffocating, were so painful, that Mrs. Helm at length entreated to be released and given up to the Indians.

"I can but die," said she; "let them put an end to my miseries at once."

Mrs. Bisson replied:

"Your death would be the signal for the destruction of us all, for Black Partridge is resolved that if but one drop of the blood of your family is spilled, he will take the lives of all that are concerned in it, even his nearest friends; and if once the work of murder commences, there will be no end to it, so long as there remains one white person or half-breed in the country."

This expostulation nerved Mrs. Helm with fresh resolution. The Indians entered, and inspected every part of the room where she was concealed, when, apparently satisfied that no one was there, they left the house. All the time of their search Mrs. Bisson kept her seat upon the side of the bed, arranging the patchwork of the quilt on which she was engaged, although she knew not but that the next moment she might receive a tomahawk in her brain. Unquestionably, the self-command of this woman saved the lives of all present.

From Ouilmette's house the Indians proceeded to Mr. Kinzie's. They entered the parlour in which the family were assembled with their faithful protectors, and seated themselves upon the floor in profound silence. Black Partridge perceived from their moody and revengeful looks what was passing in their minds, but dared not remonstrate with them. He only observed in a low tone to Wau-ban-see:

"We have endeavoured to save our friends, but it is in vain; nothing will save them now."

At that moment a friendly whoop was heard from a party of new-comers on the opposite bank of the river. Black Partridge sprang to meet the leader, and bade them make all speed to the house. It was "Billy Caldwell," a friend of Black Partridge, and his following. Entering the parlour with a firm step, and without a trace of agitation in his manner, he deliberately took off his accoutrements, and placed them with his rifle behind the door, then saluted the hostile savages.

"How now, my friends! a good day to you. I was told there were enemies here, but I am glad to find only friends. Why have you blackened your faces? Is it that you are mourning for the friends you have lost in the battle? Or is it that you are fasting? If so, ask our friend here, and he will give you to eat. He is the Indians' friend, and never yet refused them what they had need of."

Thus taken by surprise, the savages were ashamed to acknowledge their bloody purpose; they therefore said modestly that they came to beg of their friends some cotton, in which to wrap their dead before interring them. This was given them, with other presents, and they took their departure quite peaceably.

Little remains to be told of this terrible tragedy. On the third day after the battle, the family of Mr. Kinzie, with the clerks of his establishment, were conveyed to St. Joseph's, where they remained until November, when they were carried to Detroit, under the escort of Chandonnai and a trusty Indian friend, and together with their negro servants surrendered as prisoners of war to the British commanding officer, in accordance with the surrender of Detroit by General Hull. Mr. Kinzie afterwards followed them.

Captain and Mrs. Heald had been sent across the lake to St. Joseph's the day after the battle. The Captain had received two wounds, and Mrs. Heald seven, the ball from one of which was cut out of her arm with a penknife by Mr. Kinzie. Captain Heald had been taken prisoner by an Indian who had a strong personal regard for him, and who, when he saw the wounded and enfeebled state of Mrs. Heald, released his prisoner that he might accompany his wife to St. Joseph's. They were afterwards sent to the island of Mackinaw, and delivered up to the British.

Lieutenant Helm, who was likewise wounded, was carried by some friendly Indians to their village, and thence to St. Louis, where he was liberated at the intercession of a trader named Forsyth. Mrs. Helm accompanied her father to Detroit.

The surviving soldiers with their wives and children were dispersed among the different villages of the Pottowattamies, upon the Illinois, Rock River, Wabash, and Milwaukie, until the following spring, when they were for the most part carried to Detroit and ransomed. Some were detained in captivity another year, during which period they experienced more kindness than could have been expected from enemies in most cases so merciless.

And so ends our story of the Massacre at Chicago eighty-two years ago. The narrative has its lessons, which our readers will not be slow to learn.

THE GEM OF THE OCEAN.

It had been intensely hot since breakfast. At eight o'clock my watch on deck had commenced, and it was now seven bells. There was little to be done, except that some men were putting a few finishing touches to the bulwark stanchions, which some of the running lines had chafed.

I was lazy. The draught air from the bellying foot of the mainsail just caught my forehead, gently and soothingly, and I felt no inclination to finish the splice in the lee clue-line of the maintop-gallantsail, which had been allotted to me as a pastime till eight bells.

There was a gentle list to the ship; and, sitting on a spare spar with my back against the bulwarks, it was almost as easy as an arm-chair. In front of me I could just catch a glimpse of the sea to windward, between the quarter-deck rail and the weather clue of the mainsail: it was intensely blue, and here and there a little cap of foam would sparkle it, like lilies scattered on a broad slab of lapis-lazuli. But it was only for a moment; for the slight roll of the ship to leeward hid all but the quivering clue of the sail and the varnished teak-wood railing of the bulwarks.

Yes; I was lazy, but I felt I must see something more than the deck, the hen-coops, and the main hatch. The chief was talking to the captain's wife on the poop, over which an awning had been spread. It would be easy to take a

stroll on the forecastle without being observed. My splice could easily be completed by eight bells; for the clock on the saloon stairs, I could see from my station, was only at twenty minutes to twelve.

So—the decks were scorching, and the pitch stuck viciously to my sea-slippers. A whiff of good things greeted me as I passed the galley, and the cook's cheery chaff as he bustled about and dished the dinner for the watch below.

The next step found me at the latter, and with two bounds I was on the focsle-head.

"I say, quartermaster," as the next wheel relief, an old bronzed sailor with short bandy legs clothed in wide ducks, and an enormous pair of shoulders, saluted me; "I say, when do you think we shall sight Mauritius?"

"Hum! I dunno, sir!" and he stepped to the lee side and discharged an enormous column of tobacco juice into the sea. "She be slipping along pretty tidy like, and there be no swell to speak on." The captain, I remarked, said we were two hundred miles off at sights yesterday. "If that be's the reckonin', young genelman, you'll be seeing of the Peter Botte this blessed afternoon. If that warn't a cloud out there," pointing with his tarry finger to a dark haze over the bowsprit end, "I'm blowed if I wouldn't have thought it war the skysail of the Hisle o' France. But it's war than a skysail to get up to, sir, the stick's that well greased, ha! ha! Well, bust my spanker, what were my lights a-doing?" And shading his eyes with his hand, he scrutinised the suspicious haze which seemed to be breaking, but yet becoming darker every moment, till at last through it, and above it all, the bold outlines of the Peter Botte stood clearly visible.

I was so surprised that my voice forsook me. Not so the old salt; his stentorian lungs soon brought all hands rushing up the focsle ladder. Even the captain, wakened by the uproar, was to be seen racing along the quarter-deck, long glass in hand, and the mate behind him, still carrying the sextant, now useless, which in his excitement he had forgotten to lay aside.

The wind held fair, and we made good progress. By four bells in the afternoon we had drawn the island well out of the water, and the huge mass of the Peter Botte, two thousand six hundred feet, frowned like a mighty giant out of the blue southern sea, flanked by its sister of Long Mountain Bluff, from which it is said the wonderful Frenchmen could distinguish ships many days before any glass on the island could discern them.

By the first "dog watch" we had fallen off a point or so, and were running parallel with the coast. We were now taking in sail. From aloft the scene was very fine. Beneath our feet the blue water stretched right up to the deeply-indented shore of the island, and beyond it the green wooded slopes gathered themselves to the water's edge in a succession of undulating billows. But between the two, the white shining beach and sterile rocks were set as if Nature's buffer between her two great dependencies.

Here a huge rock would jut out far into the water, cutting it like a knife; while its bold side stemmed the free sweep of the waves and formed a placid bay, with stretch of sparkling pebbles and coral sand, from which the gnarled roots of a few palms would spring, bearing their frond-like foliage which shook and shivered in the sea wind.

Then a sheet of water, green and foamless, ran inwards, hedged with dense jungle, till it swept round an intervening bluff, feathered with enormous palms, mimosæ, and draped with the beautiful flowering creepers indigenous to tropical forests. Ah yes! from the sea it was like a fairy enchantment, too exquisite for words to express. And over it all the tall summits of the island looked black against the southern sky, mellowing by the gold tinge cast over it from the west.

Nestling beneath them were white and glistening bungalows, shaded by umbrageous chenars or Indian planes. And when the eye, weary with beholding all the loveliness of it, turned to our own immediate surroundings, there were the cheery faces of the men who were busily rolling up the white canvas of the topsails, and beyond them the blue wave sparkling beneath our fore-foot, and flashing up out of its deepness the wonders of coral and sea shells.

But we have no time to revel longer. All is bustle and preparation. We are rounding the lightship; and the "health boat" is almost alongside. That potent power before which seamen tremble can, however, have little to say to us. We show a clean bill of health, and the lingering tortures of Flat Island are not for us. This small islet is the quarantine station of Mauritius. Cholera often breaks out on board the coolie emigrant ships, and here all suspected arrivals are anchored till danger of infection is passed.

But now as it should be, one of the officers of health springs up the rope ladder and is on deck in a jiffy. He is a pale-faced but withal merry-eyed man, considerably stouter than his agility would have suggested.

"How do, captain?" jerking out the words as if he were shooting peas out of a pea-shooter. "Hope bill clear. No nasty passenger, eh?"

"Quite clear, doctor, glad to say! Come down and have something, and you can sign the papers."

"Right. Very good—business before pleasure—right, very—eh?"

"Yes," said the captain, laughing; "but we'll have the two together. But, by-the-bye, doctor, wouldn't it be better to signal all clean first?"

"Hum—yes! Let you in quicker—as you wish, captain, as you wish!"

"Run up the signal," said the captain quickly.

"Ay, ay, sir!" I answered; "they're bent on."

"Up, then!"

And out they flew like a many-coloured ribbon.

"Smartly done, sir!" said the little doctor, as he watched admiringly the expedition we made. "I heard them say," turning to the captain, "as I was pushing off from the wharf, that this craft of yours carried very smart signalmen. Now I believe it; the loafers ashore have quick eyes for such things."

I blushed at this unexpected compliment, and I verily believe I would have shown my pleasure in some act unbecoming to the dignity of a signal midshipman, if the captain hadn't ordered me to run forward and tell the chief officer to see all clear for mooring.

As it was, I couldn't help springing down the poop ladder at a bound, which, on any other occasion, would have brought down merited chastisement on my guilty head. On turning away to carry out the order, however, I just overheard the captain answering the compliment by conferring a still more splendid one. Really Mauritius seemed to be full of compliments. I would enjoy myself, that was certain. I would ask the captain to increase my allowance the very next day; the old cap. praising us like that—whoop! But bottling up my spirits, I gave the mate his order with all becoming gravity. Under our lower topsails we forged slowly ahead. The lightship was behind us; before, the wide harbour crowded with shipping. Slowly and yet more slowly. "Clue up the main-topsail!" roared the voice of the pilot who had just come aboard, an angular man with side whiskers and small brown eyes besmudged with red.

Away flew the clues, rattle, rattle; creak, creak went the iron sheets in the sheet blocks, and the cheery cries of the men as they manned the clue-lines and bunt-lines made harsh but pleasing music.

A couple of short turns on the poop, an order to the man at the wheel, a stare over the taffrail with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his jacket, and then came the quick command to "haul up the fore-topsail and stand by to moor!" Sharply it was done. And the next minute we were swinging snugly from a buoy surrounded by a hundred boats of all wares, and serenaded by a most unintelligible jabber. Among it I caught the oft-repeated appeal of "Sahib! Sahib! Me good boat! Me no cheatie!"

And this was Mauritius, the Gem of the Ocean. At last we had arrived, and here round about us were its people; here was its fort, its city—and ay, to the right of me even were its graves!

Port Louis is the only town in the island. It lies on the north-west, in a valley, sheltered behind by basaltic ranges, which culminate in the Peter Botte Mountain and Long Mountain Bluff; while in front it looks out over the blue Indian Ocean to the far-off coast of Madagascar.

On either side of the town a long neck of land runs out, enclosing between them the harbour. That on the right is the higher and bolder of the two, meets the sea bluffly at its apex, and is surmounted by the fort. The other, flat and grassy, is covered by half-ruined tombs, palms, and other tropical vegetation.

The harbour is commodious, and divided into an inner and outer roadstead. It has an average depth of fourteen feet, and is approached by a channel in the coral reefs, marked by buoys. There are also two lights for the guidance of shipping, one placed on Flat Island and the other on the lightship.

Thus guarded, it is a rare accident to run ashore when making the port even in the heaviest weather. There are times, however, when even this well-sheltered roadstead is the terror of mariners. Here the cyclone of 1863 raged its fiercest. Ships were torn from their anchors and dashed to pieces against each other or cast ashore.

The town itself was wrecked. Hundreds perished, and property was destroyed to the value of many thousands.

Not long ago a similar catastrophe befell the island. A cyclone passed over it, its centre being six miles to the westward of the port. Almost every wooden house was levelled, and the streets were strewn with the dead and dying. The public buildings were turned into hospitals, and the town had the aspect of having undergone a protracted bombardment.

The shipping suffered in proportion. Two large British India steamers were ashore, and one sailing ship was found inland beside a large brick building to the right of the landing, while numbers of coasters and cargo boats were destroyed or washed inshore among the houses.

Happily such scenes of suffering and devastation are of rare occurrence, else this paradise of the sea would be uninhabitable. But on this beautiful evening there were no signs of such terrors. The skies were gemmed with myriads of stars; and the white, shining city in front—skirted by the dark emerald of its plane-trees, its graceful palms and waving acacias—looked calmly out over the broad waters of the harbour, flecked by the silver radiance of the Southern Cross. Here and there the lines of light were momentarily darkened by the passage of a boat, bearing shorewards some merry-hearted tars for an evening outing; and their cheery voices would waken the dim stillness of the harbour and mingle pleasingly with the murmur of the distant city. And then—but having drunk my fill of it all, for even a tropical night will not keep tired nature awake, I went below, and was soon stretched in that repose which only hard labour and sea air can give.

I was roused by some one yelling in my ear like the screech of a fog signal, and a swaying motion of my body which made me think of cyclones. I sprang up to find the steward in my berth.

"Time to get the market boat ready, sir. It's five o'clock."

"Oh, all right! I'm with you instanter." And I was.

The morning air was cool and deliciously sweet; the land breeze had died off, and the sea was smooth as a pond. We soon reached the inner harbour, where the coasters were taking in groceries and other stuffs for the outlying villages. Others were discharging sugar, great heaps of which lay on the wooden wharves; and numbers of coolies were shovelling it into mat bags and deftly sewing them up ready for transit to Europe. These mats are imported from India, and are very handy for stowing.

We ran straight to the head of the harbour and landed at a flight of stone steps. Mounting these we found ourselves in a large square, which was composed of public buildings, shipbrokers' stores, and hotels, and through which, strange to say, ran the railway. Indeed, at the moment an engine came puffing along, quite heedless of the little black children who played on the line and rolled off in boisterous glee, in some cases narrowly escaping its wheels.

From the sea Port Louis has a picturesque and Oriental aspect, but the streets are less so than one at first imagines; they are wide, and resemble those of Cape Town. Numerous European shops also line their fronts.

Lying behind the town is the Champ de Mars. It is used as a place of amusement, and opening into it are the streets of Burbon and Corderie, while to the left of the quays is the bazaar or market-place. It is surrounded by an iron railing and has several gates leading to the principal streets, and is divided into two equal parts by Farquar Street. A broad avenue also traverses its entire length, lined on either side by covered sheds, where the wares are exposed. Fruit stalls occupy the upper end, and here is exhibited a marvellous variety—a collection that would make the fruit-sellers of the West mad with envy. Plantains in great yellow heaps are side by side with custard apples, alligator pears, mangoes, pineapples, and others too numerous to mention. Mangoes are the most esteemed by Europeans. The lower market contains the butchers' shops, where fowl, fish, and kid are conspicuous.

Here then we took our way, and having availed ourselves of the services of a native porter, crowds of whom wait at the gate with large round baskets on their heads, we proceeded to shop vigorously.

At six o'clock the market presents a busy and interesting scene. Here come all the ladies and housekeepers of Port Louis; and the broad peaked straw hat, blue linen garments, and well-greased pigtail of John Chinaman present a curious contrast to the fashionable dresses of the European ladies, which are scarcely less inharmoniously, although more picturesquely, mingled with the red-shirted Lascar and the blazing colours of the negro women. Fresh from the salt sea breezes, and precluded

for many weeks from indulging in my favourite fruits, I strolled off to the upper market, and left the steward to transact business as best he could. While enjoying a delicious plantain, I spied that functionary puffing and blowing in the crowd, mopping his rotund features with his blue spotted handkerchief, and looking the picture of vexation and anxiety.

I took him by the coat-tails to stop his progress, for he was standing by me under all sail. "Oh, sir!" he said spasmodically. "Oh, sir!—there you are! Puff—puff; the place is——" and he looked round to see that his porter was safe by his side. Then in my ear—"don't feel safe with these black chaps," chucking his thumb over his right shoulder in the direction of his negro escort, who, with a huge basket on his woolly head, was staring stolidly at the steward's back—"don't look straight"—I thought he did at the moment, remarkably so—"they all steal."

"Me no stealin', sar! Dat am one lie!" and the negro flashed down a ferocious look on the fat steward, who had turned round in surprise.

He started back a bit, quite frightened like.

"Oh, no! you look quite honest, oh, yes!" he said quickly. "But bless me, why didn't you tell me you spoke English?"

"Why, sir, I've been making signs to him the whole time, and hard to make him understand them it was. Well, these black fellows beat me, I'm blowed if they don't. But, sir, you've finished that plantain, and it's"—pulling out a huge silver watch—"it's half-past seven, and breakfast's at eight, dear me! and the captain 'ill be that angry. Oh, sir, come away!"

And so ended my first shopping in Mauritius. However, we were not late, and the captain was not angry.

Before leaving the island, I had the pleasure of visiting the Gardens for which it is justly celebrated. The botanical gardens of Pomplemoussus were founded in the year 1768, by a French gentleman. They are composed of wide shady avenues, bordered by magnificent trees—conspicuous among which are camphors, huge Mauritius palms, and the slender-stemmed areca nut trees.

A little way down the walk which leads inwards from the entrance, guarded by an ornamental gateway, is an obelisk which was erected to the memory of those who, in some way or other, have benefited the colony. More especially does it commemorate those who have introduced useful plants and animals into the island. It is encircled by enormous palms, bearing fronds eight to nine feet long. The walks are bordered by beautiful flowers; indeed, the grounds are kept in perfect order. And scattered here and there among the trees are gay pavilions which heighten the Eastern character of the Gardens, till the visitor almost feels that he is intruding on the sacred precincts of some Oriental Mogul or Haroun-al-Raschid, reserved peculiarly for such beauties of the harem as Zobeide, or she who sleeps beneath the white domes of the Taj Mahal.

Little streams of pure sparkling water run through the grounds, crossed by wooden bridges, and overhung so thickly in some places by the traveller's tree as to be impenetrable to the sun.

Near a grove of mango-trees there is a large pond filled with tame fish, and close beside it the grave of Paul and Virginia, the hero and heroine of Bernardin de St. Pierre's beautiful romance. It is a square monument, built of bricks and whitewashed, but somewhat dilapidated. It is overhung by feathery bamboos and several of the beautiful Mauritius palms.

Naturally enough Mauritius lends itself to the pleasures of the yachtsman, and trips may even be made to the neighbouring island of Bourbon.

The coasters are beautiful vessels, and it is a pretty sight to see them gliding out of the harbour in the glorious tropical evenings before the land breeze. They look like the whitest of white clouds sailing over the star radiances.

Many happy days indeed did we spend in this lovely spot. But, like all other pleasures they, too, came to an end. And one starlight night, before even the purple tinge had melted on the western sea, we slipped our moorings and stood away ever northward and eastward.

At midnight the moon stood over the shining cliffs of the Peter Botte Mountain, sheeting the sea in rippling silver, and guiding our prow through the waters as on a pathway of light. The lower heights of the island were thrown into bolder relief. It looked like a huge black cloud resting on the sea. The moon sank slowly behind the darkening cliffs, resting on them, ere it finally disappeared, as it were for an instant like the aureola on the forehead of a saint. And then, as we looked, the night mists gathered themselves from the

sea, at first in long white strands that stretched from valley to valley and joined peak to peak, but deeper and ever whiter, till, like the shroud over the dead, it hid the Gem of the Ocean from all vision.

SOME TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS.

PROBABLY the bibulous Rabbi Ben Israel of the Golden Legend may not be a very reputable authority, generally speaking, but there is little doubt that when he sings:

> The Kabala and Talmud hoar
> Than all the prophets prize I more,
> For water is all Bible lore,
> But Mishna is strong wine,

he expresses a view at one time very generally held. A kindred phrase has it that the text of "Scripture is but as pepper while the Talmud is aromatics," and we may freely admit that a good deal of the latter is somewhat spicy and highly seasoned, and with other Eastern legends on the same subjects makes up an anthology as curious as interesting.

To go back to the beginning, it may be fairly said that a volume of respectable size could be filled with Adamite legend and tradition. In the seventeenth century the accounts which had been up to then recognised, received an addition. The Abbé Isaac de la Peyrère wrote a book, in which he attempted to prove, on "orthodox" lines, the existence of a race of human beings before the Adam of the Bible. Taking as his text a rather obscure passage in the Epistle to the Romans, the Abbé proceeded to argue that the creation in the first chapter of Genesis was the creation of the Gentiles, while that of the second was of the progenitor of the Jews. He called attention to the difference in the method of creation, insisted that the Gentiles were invariably referred to as "sons of men," while the Adamites are "sons of the man," and claimed that the pre-Adamites are specifically referred to in Romans viii. 20 as the "creature that was made subject to vanity." Great stress is laid on the expression that when Adam was created there was not found a helpmeet for him, a phrase which may imply that none of the females of the first creation were good enough for the new "lord and master of earth"; and the Abbé marshals in strong array the arguments which he conceives are to be drawn from the differing descriptions of the creation, from the familiar difficulty of Cain's fear of meeting people, from his building a city — even from the Divine warning, "Sin lieth at the door"—which he construes to mean "judgement shall be given at the gates."

But the Abbé's book was condemned by the authorities, despite its ingenious efforts after orthodoxy, and, after all, his deductions lacked the picturesque extravagance of some of the earlier traditions.

The mention of Adam's helpmeet calls to mind the legend of Lilith—his first wife, according to the Rabbis. Whether she was one of the female creation of Chapter I., or a demon, or something between the two, she was, considered matrimonially, a complete failure. She was expelled after living with Adam for a hundred and thirty years, and subsequently became the wife of Satan, by whom she was the mother of the Jinns, so familiar in Persian fairy lore. The emphatic remark of Adam when he first saw Eve, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," makes, it is suggested, a comparison between Eve and the beautiful but fiend-like Lilith, not complimentary to the latter; while the reference, on the birth of Seth, to him as Adam's son "in his own likeness, after his image," conveys a painful hint of the uncanny offspring born to Adam and Lilith.* Perhaps in revenge for this, Lilith—the name occurs translated "night monster" in Isaiah xxxiv.—became the sworn foe of little children, whom she was wont to strangle with one of her glorious golden hairs, unless the watchfulness of their mothers drove her away. It has, indeed, been gravely suggested by an etymologist greatly daring that our word lullaby is simply a corruption of "Lilla abi." Lilith, avaunt! which mothers and nurses would croon over the cradles, or write on the door-post.

It would be interesting to know something about Adam and Eve's appearance. Unfortunately, though there is no lack of descriptions, there is a complete lack of harmony amongst them. Some authorities hold that Adam and Eve were created on the same day, which they say was Friday, and either at three o'clock or at the last hour; others, as we have seen, make Adam precede Eve by a hundred and thirty years. Those who hold to the former opinion say that the apparent age of both was twenty years, while some of the adherents of the

* Abel was then dead, and Cain differentiated by his "mark." Some of the commentators, indeed, hold that Cain was not Adam's son but the offspring of Satan.

latter say that Eve was at first quite young and reached maturity gradually, quoting—with what relevancy it is hard to see—Ezekiel xvi. 8. The general view is that they were extremely beautiful, but other theories are propounded which scarcely fit in with our present æsthetic tastes. For instance, on the strength of Psalm cxxxix. 5, it is conjectured that they were made back to back—Adam being the supposed author of the psalm. Others, with a sort of premonition of some recent theories, equip them with tails; others again declare that Adam was blind, that while he was in the Garden he was pachydermatous, but that at the Fall his body became soft with the exception of the nails. With regard to stature, the Talmudists run riot. A comparatively modest estimate gives Adam's height as that of a palm-tree; another says that while his foot, seventy cubits long, rested on the top of a mountain in Ceylon, the other leg was in the sea; while a third triumphantly calculates that it would take five hundred years to walk up him, and five years to walk round him—from which we are compelled to realise that the patriarch was somewhat slender for his height. In the face of these dimensions we read without surprise that the Angels respectfully remonstrated, with the result that Adam's height was reduced to a thousand cubits. The details respecting Eve's stature are less circumstantial. The Mohammedans, however, have a tradition that when her head rested on a hill near Mecca, her knees were supported on two mounds in an adjoining plain, distant from each other two musket-shots.

As might be expected, the Scriptural account of the Fall is greatly amplified. Satan (or Samaël) tried for long to enter within the Garden, which it would seem he was unable to do without assistance. He besought all animals in turn but was refused by all except the serpent, or, according to other authorities, the peacock. The serpent was then a beautiful animal, with an upright instead of a crawling movement, and the Fiend entered Paradise riding on it as upon a camel. All animals had the gift of speech, a power which seems to have been possessed by the Tree of Knowledge, for we are told that, when Satan led Eve towards it, a voice came therefrom, speaking the words subsequently embodied in a psalm: "Let not the foot of pride come against me." It is said that this power of speech remained with the lower animals till after the Fall; and a rather pretty anecdote is told of the reason of its being taken away. Adam was one day severely beating the ox with which he was ploughing, and the animal asked, almost in the words of Balaam's ass: "Wherefore hast thou smitten me?" "Because," replied Adam, "thou didst not draw the plough aright." "Adam," said the ox reproachfully, "when thou wast rebellious did God smite thee thus?" And then the patriarch prayed in his anguish: "O God, is every beast to reproach me and bring my sin to remembrance?" And from that day, in pity to man, the power of speech was taken from the brute creation.

Many are the attempts to identify the forbidden fruit. Some say it was the fig, others the grape, others, again, the pomegranate; but the most "Arabian Nightish" description paints it as an ear of wheat, which looked like a ruby and was as big as an ostrich egg, and which grew on a tree whose trunk was like gold, its branches silver, and its leaves emerald.

Our first parents were expelled about three o'clock of the afternoon of Friday, the tenth of May, having resided in Eden seven years, two months, two weeks, and three days. Adam was banished to Ceylon and Eve to Mecca, and they remained apart for two hundred years. Adam, according to some accounts, spent half this time weeping with his face to the earth; others, less charitably, aver that his solitude was cheered by Lilith, who resumed her former relations with him. When he repented, and rejoined Eve, he begged that something might be given him from the happy garden of innocence which he had forfeited, and lo! in answer to his prayer, the three mighty Archangels were sent to him, Michael bringing gold, Gabriel frankincense, and Raphael myrrh—mystic gifts, in after years associated with the offering of the Magi, whom early Christian tradition identified with Enoch, Melchisedek, and Elias.

Adam died on the anniversary of the day on which he had sinned; around his death-bed were gathered his descendants, represented by fifteen thousand males and females innumerable. He was buried in the cave at Macpelah, which was also the sepulchre of Eve. But another and fairer tradition says that Adam's body was given to the pious care of the saintly Melchisedek, who buried it at Jerusalem, "the centre of the earth," in a spot which to after generations became awful and holy as the "Place of a

Skull." There, centuries after, was reared another Tree of Life,* and from the sacred wounds of the Sufferer, the promised Seed of the Woman, there fell upon the dead, dry bones of the first Adam the Blood which redeemed the world; and the infant Church loved to believe that at that wondrous anointing Adam became once again sinless as when, in the vanished Eden of the early world, he walked and talked with God.

Amongst the relics of Adam of which tradition or legend speaks, were his staff, his coat, a book on husbandry, and two psalms, the hundred and fourth and hundred and thirty-ninth. We may perhaps make mention of the staff and coat in some accounts of the legends connected with some other of the "elders," in which they play many a grotesque rôle. But one traditional legacy remains with us to this day in the shape of

> the spicy breezes
> That blow soft on Ceylon's isle,

for whence come they but from the aromatic trees and shrubs which sprang, long ages back, from the "fig-leaves" which fell from Adam when he was cast on to the Isle of Serendib?†

MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Joan Vellacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LVIII. WISHING FOR DEATH.

THOUGH water was not wanting, the means of using it were deficient at Rothery. A fire-engine was not to be procured under many hours' time, and as is frequently the case, the means at hand failed when most needed. All night long the flames raged, seizing portion after portion of the beautiful Palace with fiendish eagerness and rapidity. The comparatively large crowd of dale folk did their utmost to save it, and now and again success seemed to crown the efforts; but the success was but short-lived, the fire demons seemed bent on destruction, and as the day dawned every one present knew that the Palace of the old Kings of Rothery was doomed to utter destruction.

As for the Duke, he had enough on his hands now without looking after the burning Palace. His one thought was about his niece and the poor, gaunt skeleton brought out of the burning turret.

Leaving the Palace to the dale folk, he had the two unconscious beings conveyed on quickly extemporised stretchers, and wrapped up in blankets, to the farm in the wood. The living needed all his attention, for now it was known that the dead had already given up his account to his Maker. When the fire, in the unaccountable fashion peculiar to that element, had suddenly forsaken the corner of the turret to shoot upwards to the second storey, Oldcorn discovered the King's body, charred and almost unrecognisable, clinging close to the wall where, though no one knew it but Penelope, his treasure had been hidden. They carried all that remained of the last King of Rothery to a woodman's shed close by in the glen, and then returned to the work of rescue. Many were the comments exchanged and passed on by the more loquacious dale folk as to the cause of this night's misfortune. Philip's reappearance when all had believed him to be dead was much discussed, but no one doubted the author of the strange history. The King could not abide strangers, and he never had brooked the idea of a rival. His crazy brain had projected and carried out unaided the treachery which had placed Philip in a lonely room in the turret, a place where no one came, and from which no calls for help could be heard. The old man had not killed his enemy in fair fight, but he had cleverly managed to entrap the man whose very name he hated.

All this much was easily divined, but when Oldcorn returned from the farm he was besieged with questions. Was the Princess hurt, was she herself again? and the poor stranger, had he passed away, for the word had gone round that his life was ebbing fast? The feeling uppermost in the minds of the dale folk, however, was admiration for the courage of their Princess. No other woman could have done what she had done, no other would have waited without a word escaping her lips in that burning chamber. Oldcorn had seen the flame stretch out its cruel fangs towards her, and he had not reached her one minute too soon.

Oldcorn further reported that she had come to herself, but that she was terribly burnt on one side of her face and neck. A mighty shame, he thought it, but the doctor

* According to a well-known tradition the wood of the Cross was from a tree sprung from three seeds of the Tree of Life placed in Adam's mouth. In some old pictures of the Crucifixion the Cross seems to have its roots, so to speak, in the skull depicted at its foot.

† This is according to the Mohammedan view, which places Paradise in the seventh heaven and not upon earth. The casting out, therefore, was a serious matter.

was coming as he left, and further news had to be mere conjecture. Betty and some of the grand servants were there, being in his opinion of "varry lal good" in a case like this, and the feeling of intense superiority to any southerner helped the brave folk to renewed efforts.

But the news spread with rapidity, and was at once firmly believed, that it was the King himself that had set fire to the turret, not by mishap but with intention; that he meant to burn down all trace of the foreigner who had come to interfere with his rights. So they said, but the exact truth would never be known.

"The oald King was t' best blood, aw cudn't do with no stranger aboot him."

"He shud a gone a lal bit ago till t' silem."

"Ah was shure t' pooar man was far eneuf gean when the Prince died."

"Aye, but he war sensible till t' last minnet, one cud see that, he kent nowt o' strangers; with t' Kings o' Rothery it wur a law in ther natur."

"This King wur rayder queear; if yaw happen't ta offend him he wur shure to caw for a settlement or t' akount."

"He did it, shure and sartin, and Mister Philip has gaun ta pay the bill."

"He'll gaun in a crack, I tak it."

"The Princess, she conquer't the King and pay't him what she had a mind, becos she hed t' hank in her own hand."

These were some of the remarks that were exchanged, and it must be owned that on the whole the King was more admired than blamed for his share in the misfortune. The poor, daft old man had in truth outwitted them all, and the shepherds recounted how they had spent hours and days in searching for Philip, when all the time the King must have been laughing in his sleeve at them. The dale folk had a true respect for the man who had sat silent when "they were trap'sin up and doon t' country."

Betty had come to the front now, and she was one of those dependents who can rise to the occasion. She was secretly glad to lord it over "the gran'" maids that were more fit to stand in a row than to be of use, and Oldcorn had to obey Betty when she spoke firmly, sending him to the burning Palace for many necessaries before she was satisfied with the arrangements at the farm.

The large room below was hastily turned into a dwelling-room for the Duke, but upstairs the two best rooms were made fit to receive the patients. Before help could arrive Betty had done wonders, and the Princess, who soon recovered consciousness, was bidden sternly to stay where she was till the doctor should see her. Betty had not waited for him to dress Penelope's terrible burns, and her tender hands had in her own estimation more skill to soothe pain than any belonging to the medical profession.

Penelope was for the moment content to be still, she felt weak and powerless after the awful strain she had gone through, so without comment she watched the labours of Betty, till at last she murmured:

"Go to him, Betty, go to — to your master. The pain is easier now."

Penelope felt that for her life offered nothing more, but she wanted Philip to live. She had an intense wish for his life, the life she had saved.

When at last the doctor came she was roused by his coming first in her room.

"Go to him," she said in her old imperious manner. "I am only burnt; Betty has done all that can be done for me."

The doctor obeyed, but it was a very long time before he returned, and when he did he found the Princess sitting up on her extemporised bed.

"How is he, Dr. Potter? Is he——"

"Of course it's a serious case, a very serious case, but we must do the best we can. The Duke has sent a man to telegraph for Dalton from Carlisle; don't worry yourself at all. Now what about you? I have heard of your heroic courage."

The village doctor was proud of being on the spot and of having a share in these strange and marvellous events. Never before had he been called in for the Princess, whose health had been always perfect. Now he was grieved to see the ravages of the fire. Her beautiful hair and one side of her face and neck was burnt; all her life she would bear the marks of the accident. The shock to the nervous system, too, must be great, and he proceeded to order perfect rest.

In the room below the Duke was walking up and down in a strange state of agitation, waiting for the verdict.

"Well, doctor, what do you say? We must have the best advice, no means must be left untried to save Mr. Gillbanks-Winskell. It has been a terrible night."

The Duke looked years older; he had gone through more than he cared to realise, but outwardly he was calm and courteous. His beautiful manner would never forsake him.

"He is in high fever—I should say from the effects of starvation," said the doctor.

The Duke made a deprecating movement with his hand.

"Doctor, the man who comes here must keep his own counsel. The King is dead, his mind was unhinged; we must make as light of this sad work as we can. For the sake of the rest of the family and for the sake of Philip Gillbanks himself, you must keep your own counsel."

The Duke was going through a bitter moment. To make conditions with a country doctor was a lesson in humility which he had never thought to learn. Happily Dr. Potter was the son of a dale farmer. He understood the character of the man before him, and he stretched out his hand to show his submission.

"I think, sir, you will not find me wanting in reticence. As to the present, we must keep the Princess quiet. I must keep her for a little while under opiates; I see she has suffered a terrible shock. She must not be allowed to think. Good Lord, how that light comes in! I fear there is no hope for the Palace."

When the Duke was alone he murmured:

"The old saying was true after all. The doom would come when the Palace was held up with iron bands. I helped to bring about the realisation of the prophecy, I, and the child I trained."

He sat down by the old table and leant his head on his hands. The labourer had not been found worthy of his hire.

"Fate is stronger than the will of man, and now—and now—— still, Penelope is saved; but that burn will disfigure her, my poor child, my pretty Penzie."

He roused himself and walked slowly and sadly upstairs. He wanted to see her before they gave her opiates, his brave Princess. Betty let him in cautiously.

"She is a bit easier now, sir, poor lamb."

The Duke knelt down by the bedside and took Penzie's hand. Her eyes were closed now, but her lips were pressed firmly together, showing that she was braving pain with the heroism of a true Winskell.

"Penzie," whispered the Duke, and a new depth of softness was in his tone, "my poor child, my poor child, you are suffering."

"It is nothing. I mean, it is of no consequence. Tell me about him, uncle, and—whilst I remember, send Oldcorn to telegraph to Dora Bethune about—about Philip."

"Yes, yes; make your mind easy."

"Tell me about father—was he——?"

"The King died guarding his treasure. He would not save himself, or else he could not; but the gold is lost, the papers and everything were burnt. I doubt if we shall recover much."

Penzie closed her eyes.

"I am glad," she said. "Tell me what the doctor says about Philip."

"We mean to pull him through, though he is very ill."

Penzie started up.

"Uncle, he must live, he must be saved, you understand. I can't tell you what the thought was to me that perhaps I had caused——"

"Hush!" And then Betty ran up and showed her displeasure by driving away the Duke, and once more reigned supreme by Penzie's bedside; but the Princess had fallen back exhausted, suffering renewed agony from the burns.

"Betty, I want to die," she said; "let me die."

CHAPTER LIX. A NEW BEGINNING.

THE next afternoon Dora Bethune was sitting with her mother in the drawing-room of the Castle, and near her was a pile of notes and letters which she had conscientiously written during the last two hours. Now she was trying to write to Forster whilst her mother talked about many things.

"Tell dear Forster that he must really come back soon. Your father did not like his sudden departure. I know, of course, it was all for the sake of those poor dear men, but his own family should count for something. What does it say, Dora dear, in the Bible, about being worse than an infidel? I don't mean that, of course, Forster is so good; but still those of your own household, you know, might be considered. And then I did so hope he would marry this year."

"Oh, no, mother; Forster will never marry."

"But why not, dear? I hope marriage is honourable to all. If I had never married, Forster could not have been the apostle of the poor as he is now. We ought to be much obliged to Saint Peter for marrying, because one may point to him; only it is a pity they connect Saint Peter with Rome, where priests don't marry, I mean where—— Oh dear, there is Mr. De Lucy coming up the drive. It is his last week here. He is walking with the telegraph boy."

Dora put down her pen with a sigh. Mr. De Lucy came in at the same time as the servant who brought the telegram.

"I'm so glad to see you, Mr. De Lucy. Dora is quite tired with writing my notes.

She is wonderful. A telegram for you, dear. What is it about?"

Dora shook hands with De Lucy, but he saw that her eyes had still the far-away look he had seen in them ever since that day at Southampton. He stood beside her for a moment. He liked to watch her. All his ideas about the uselessness of women and their frivolity had vanished. He knew now that he loved this girl who had a strong, innocent look in her face. He was jealous of the love she gave her brother so bountifully. But the idea of love had not ever entered Dora's mind, and he knew it.

Suddenly Dora uttered a little cry of joy, and her first look was towards him. The glance was so full of happiness that it warmed De Lucy's heart.

"What is it?" he said.

She handed him the telegram, and then went quickly towards her mother.

"Mother! isn't it wonderful? Philip Gillbanks is not dead! Oh, mother!"

"Not dead, dear! Penelope isn't a widow! How extraordinary! Then he must be mad, poor dear man. That is far worse."

De Lucy came near and read out the words:

"P. sends word Philip is alive. Fire at the Palace, she saved him from certain death. Both ill, but we hope for the best. I will write.—GREYBARROW."

Dora went to the writing-table and seized a telegraph form. She copied the above words exactly, and addressed it to Forster.

"Mother, I must send it to Forster."

"Oh, yes, dear, of course, but it's rather expensive to send a long message to Africa, isn't it?"

"A mere nothing," said De Lucy, and he returned to Dora's side. This news had brought back the girl's youth.

Mrs. Bethune rose.

"I must go and tell your father. It is extraordinary, but that dear Princess never did act like other people. Fancy losing your husband for all those weeks and his turning up again! Where is Adela?"

Dora did not answer. She was writing her telegram as her mother shut the door. Then suddenly, regardless of De Lucy, she laid her head on the table and sobbed for joy.

"Forster! Forster! Oh, Mr. De Lucy, I can't help it, I am so glad."

De Lucy was on his knees by her side, calling her by her Christian name.

"Dora, Dora—I am so glad for your gladness."

"Oh!" said Dora, starting up. The surprise was great. Her eyes were opened, and she knew his secret now.

"Don't," he said, "don't look so surprised. Couldn't you guess? You have left off contradicting me, so don't begin again."

He laughed a little to reassure her, though he was deeply in earnest.

"My telegram!" she stammered.

"Give it to me—I will see it is all right. I will ride over to the post-office myself. That little woman will never spell the address without my help. Tell me that I may send it to—my brother?"

"Oh!" said Dora again. "You helped me, you were good to me, but I never thought of that."

"No, you never did. I don't wonder you never thought of me, darling, you are infinitely too good for me. I've been an ass all my life, but——"

Then she laughed. She was young, and now she was happy. Philip was not dead.

"Don't say such funny things or I must contradict you."

"You had better say 'no.' I've done nothing for anybody all my life, myself excepted. You and Forster—all of you are so different."

"There's mother. My telegram must go. Don't say anything now, please."

"Then I'll take that telegram at once, and send another to the Duke. No, you had better write."

He was gone before Mrs. Bethune could stop him. She turned to Dora.

"Sit down, dear, and telegraph to Jack Rookwood. It is extraordinary; and now do write to the Princess and ask her all about it."

"The Princess is ill, you see; I won't write yet, but Mr. De Lucy has taken the telegram, and he wants——"

"What else, dear?"

"Oh, mother, he says he wants to take me!—when Forster comes home—but——"

When Penelope woke up to full consciousness, it seemed to her that weeks, months, years had gone by, for she remembered strange intervals of terrible visions, haunting dreams, and awful struggles with evil spirits. Then at other times she had rehearsed again the terrible fire scene. It had seemed to her that hideous demons stretched out their arms to her, in order to draw her into the roaring flames, then Betty's form and the doctor's voice recalled her to reality, till the next hideous nightmare again overtook her.

For her, time had vanished; it was not. But with a new feeling of life she woke up one evening in bright moonlight, and saw that the faithful Betty was sleeping quietly.

She was conscious of a peace to which she had long been a stranger, and of an unusual clearness of memory. She rehearsed with great distinctness all the events of that awful night, till she at last reached the moment when the flash of light had shown her Philip's face.

But that was long ago, very long ago. Where was Philip now? Was he dead? Had she gone through all that for nothing? He must be dead; nobody had mentioned him to her during all those days of fearful dreams. There he had appeared to her always with a terrible expression on his face. Was he dead? She raised herself up and listened. She felt much better now; her head she felt was still bound up, but the pain was no longer acute. Her last conscious recollection had been of intense agony; now all was changed, all around her there was peace and rest, almost the rest, she thought, which the dead must experience.

The dead—was Philip dead? She must know. An intense longing for certainty one way or the other took possession of her. She looked across the room, but faithful, tired Betty was sleeping soundly. Evidently they no longer feared for her well-doing, but what of Philip?

She felt strong again to act. She rose softly and wrapped herself up, but she noticed that she was not so strong as she had been; still she could walk easily across the room and across the passage. Philip's room was close at hand, she would go and see for herself.

Very gently she opened the door, and stood in the passage listening for a few seconds in trepidation.

All was silent.

She crossed the passage to the door of the room where she knew that Philip had been carried. She turned the handle, and the moonlight from the opposite window played all about her. There was a long path of bright light in front of her, and for a few steps she walked in it.

"There shall be light," were the words that came into her mind, "light at evening time."

She felt very weary now. After all she was not the strong, proud woman of old, but some one different, some one who could be glad that she had saved Philip.

Her heart beat fast as she noticed that part of the room was hidden by a great screen. She went round it, and walking very softly she stood where she could see everything. A great joy filled her heart. Philip was alive. He was lying there near the further window, and all the strong moonlight was over him. Some way from him a strange nurse was resting on a mattress upon the floor, and her regular breathing showed that she was sleeping soundly, but Penelope saw she was not undressed, so she was only dozing. She looked again. Philip was there, partially propped up, with his head turned towards the window. His pale face was like that in some picture she had seen of a celestial being, some saint drawn by Fra Angelico. His eyes were open and his thin hands were closed. She had walked so softly that it was not wonderful he had not heard her, so she stood motionless, holding her breath and looking at him. He was alive, Philip was alive! The haunting fear that he was dead was gone, but—what would he say to her? Perhaps he did not know she had saved him. Should she speak softly, and let him turn and see her? Perhaps that would startle him too much. She made a step nearer and tried to make her footfall audible.

She was successful, for Philip turned his head towards her, but not a sound, not a word escaped him. He only looked at her with wide-open eyes, but said nothing.

Then Penelope knew that she had murdered his love, and the realisation of this fact was so awful, so overwhelming, that she stood quite motionless where she was, without uttering a word, almost without breathing.

How long they looked at each other quite silently and quite motionless, Penelope could not tell. The story of her whole past life seemed to be flashed out before her, and her sin hung over it like a black pall. The love she had despised and which she had scorned and spurned was gone, it was hers no longer.

It was dead, as dead as she had thought Philip had been, and she had killed that strong, wonderful power of loving in him, which had once or twice nearly conquered her great pride, till falling lower, she had dragged down another in her fall.

Her knees trembled, her strength seemed to be giving way, but gathering up her remaining courage she took one step nearer to him, before sinking down beside his bed. She could not bear that silent look any longer.

"Nurse," said Philip's voice very softly, but the voice was strangely altered, Penelope thought.

"He calls to her to protect himself from me. He will not even notice me. I have killed the old Philip."

"Oh, Philip!" she said under her breath,

for the nurse was sleeping so soundly that she did not hear his soft call.

Still there was silence. Then she hid her face in her hands, and this action reminded her that she, too, must be much changed. She looked up suddenly at him to see if, perhaps, he had taken her for some one else. But her husband's face was still turned towards her, his eyes still looked full at her, and the light still fell on his pale features. Then very slowly he stretched out his hands a little way.

"Who is there?" he asked in a whisper.

"Philip! don't you know me?" she answered.

Her voice was hardly recognisable, so much did she tremble. His hands fell down upon his counterpane.

"It is Penelope," he said, with a weary sigh.

"Yes, yes, Philip; didn't they tell you that I saved you from the fire? Didn't they tell you that I have been ill, or I would have been here to nurse you back to life? Oh, I thought just now that—that——"

She could not finish the sentence.

"I am better, Penelope. When I am well I will go away. I have been thinking it all over since I have been able to think. Thank you for coming to—to look after me."

The tone was very quiet, very simple; like that of a tired sick child who is weary of its life.

"Philip, Philip, don't say all that. Hush, don't hurt me; it does hurt me. Don't think I have not suffered. Don't turn your head away. Philip, pity me; look at me."

But he did not turn his head towards her as he answered:

"Hush! don't wake the nurse. She is tired. It is useless now."

"No, no, don't say so; pity me. Look at me, and see——"

"I cannot see you, Penelope; I am blind. But I will not be a burden upon you. I will go away when they will let me. There is no cure for this blindness. It was the sudden—— No—hush, don't say any more. My poor nurse has had a long watching."

But a low cry of pain was heard in the room.

"Blind, blind! Oh, Philip!"

She had gathered him to her arms once more, as she had done upon that awful night, and again she laid his head upon her breast. Perhaps the reason of it was not love nor passion, but the whole giving up of her life to him, the whole dedication of the remainder of her poor, deluded existence, as she sobbed:

"Oh, Philip, I will be your eyes; I will work for you always—always. Forgive me, forgive me, if you can, and pity me a little."

He closed his sightless eyes, and for a moment a pale flush of joy overspread his face, as he allowed his head to rest upon her breast. Then, almost immediately, he disengaged himself.

"No, no; I must not deceive myself again. Thank you, Penelope, thank you for being sorry; but, no, it is impossible. I must not be a lifelong burden to you."

Now Publishing,

THE

EXTRA SUMMER NUMBER

OF

CONTAINING

Complete Stories by Popular Writers.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

NOTICE.

On the 12th of SEPTEMBER will be published, price 6d., the

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SHOULD CLOTHES HANG OR BE FOLDED?—They last longer if carefully folded and put away. If dresses of elaborate make are required, plenty of thin paper should be laid between the folds, and the sleeves and bodice stuffed with paper to prevent creasing. If there is no accommodation for folding clothes away, hang skirts on two nails—the front part of the band on one nail and the back on another, so that the garment will hang straight out.

MACARONI À LA MILANESE.—Boil two ounces of macaroni, and drain away the water. Blend in a saucepan an ounce of butter with half an ounce of flour, then add an ounce of grated cheese, half a teaspoonful of made mustard, salt and cayenne to taste. Stir these together, and add the yolk of two eggs, beaten with a tablespoonful of milk. Pour this into a saucepan, and then add a gill of light stock. Stir till it thickens, and then pour over the macaroni. Dust cheese over the top, and serve.

LEMONS SHOULD BE KEPT IN EVERY HOUSE, and if bought in quantities they may be kept by being tied on to a string and hung up, no two being allowed to touch each other. Another method is to wrap each lemon in paper, and keep them in well-closed tins.

YORKSHIRE STEAK.—Take one or one and a half pounds of beefsteak. Dip it into a mixture of flour, pepper, and salt, and then lay it at the bottom of a Yorkshire pie-dish. Slice two onions, and lay them over the beef, cover with flour and water paste, or a piece of greased paper, and let it bake for half an hour. Mix a teaspoonful of curry powder and two teaspoonfuls of vinegar in a cup of hot stock. Pour it over the beef, cover again, and let it bake gently for an hour and a half. Place the meat on a dish with the onions on the top. Thicken and flavour the gravy, and pour round.

BACON KROMESKIES.—Cut some very thin slices of bacon, about one and a half inches broad by two inches long. Lay the slices flat, and place a little minced meat, well seasoned, on each. Roll up the bacon tightly, taking care that the mince does not escape, and put aside in a cool place. To serve, dip each into batter, and fry a golden brown, and garnish with fried parsley. I believe this dish originates in Italy, where it is served with pieces of celery, dipped in batter and fried too.

EIFEL CREAM.—Procure a sponge cake which has been baked in a mould, and which is two or three days old, cut off the top, and scoop out the inside of the cake, leaving a wall of about an inch or an inch and a half in thickness all round. Soak half an ounce of gelatine in cold water, then place it over a saucepan of boiling water to dissolve, adding an ounce of sugar, and a dessertspoonful of lemon juice, whip half a pint of cream to a froth, and then stir in the gelatine and sugar, pour the cream into the cake, placing in it pieces of preserved pineapple, strawberries, or any kind of fruit that is liked. Replace the top of the cake, and ornament it with heaps of the cream.

BUNIONS may be treated by making the following application with a camel's hair pencil every day: Carbolic acid, tincture of iodine, glycerine, of each two drachms. Mix. If this causes too much irritation of the skin, oleate of copper applied in the form of a plaster may be substituted.

A USEFUL TOILET-POWDER for those who suffer from excessive perspiration: Powdered calamine, two drachms; finely-powdered orris root, one ounce; powdered starch, three ounces.

TO REMOVE WINE STAINS FROM TABLE LINEN.—Put an ounce of chloride of lime in a stone jar, and add gradually two pints and a half of cold water. Shake it well every day for a week, then let it settle. After about ten days pour off the clear portion into a clean bottle through muslin to strain it, and keep for use. When required, it may be used in the proportion of three tablespoonfuls of the mixture to six of cold water. The stains must be first wetted with cold water and then placed in the liquid, when they will disappear.

TIPS ON LAYING LINOLEUM.—While it is difficult to follow a system in fitting oil-cloth and linoleum, a few cardinal rules must be observed, and I venture to suggest them. In cutting linoleum from a diagram, allow an inch at the ends. If it is not to be laid at once allow also a fraction on the width, for shrinkage is probable both ways. Get the diagram correct to the fraction of an inch, so that if cutting must be done for centre pieces or register holes, it can be done before the cloth is laid on the floor. Smooth the floor by planing the planks. Do not try to make it even by laying strips of paper lining over unevenness in the floor. The future service of the cloth will depend upon the floor being perfectly smooth.

FISH AND MACARONI go well together, and the following recipe I find popular: Butter a pie-dish, and cover it with boiled macaroni cut into short lengths, then add a layer of cold cooked fish, continue the alternate layers till the dish is full. For about a quart of this mixture prepare a breakfastcupful of sauce as follows: Fry a little chopped onion in butter, add a large tablespoonful of flour and three or four stewed tomatoes. Season with pepper and salt, and strain over the fish. Cover over the dish with a layer of bread-crumbs, and bake about twenty minutes or half an hour. N.B.—Those who do not like tomato sauce with fish should substitute anchovy sauce, and they will have an equally good dish.

CLEANSING GREEN VEGETABLES thoroughly in spring and summer, is by no means the simple thing that so many people imagine it to be. The common idea is that by soaking either cauliflower or cabbage in salted water all the insects are drawn out; I have found that salt, though it kills insects, does not draw them out, and consequently they are often hidden in the vegetables, and are very often boiled, and sometimes even served with it! To avoid this catastrophe, it is best whilst cleansing vegetables to use two bowls. One should contain lukewarm water in which there is a little vinegar, and the other plain cold water. Divide your cabbage into three pieces, instead of the usual four quarters, and wash each piece separately in the warm water. Shake thoroughly, and then place in the cold water for five minutes, which brings up the crispness. Cauliflowers should be placed head downwards, and left to soak for at least half an hour in the cold water. If my suggestion is followed, the objectionable green insects will never be found lurking within the leaves of dressed greens. The same vinegar water may be used twice if a little hot water be added to it.

IRISH MOSS JELLY.—The necessary ingredients are a good handful of moss, juice of two lemons, one quart of boiling water, a glass of wine, quarter of a teaspoonful of cinnamon, and sugar to taste. The moss to be satisfactory requires washing in five waters, then soak it for an hour in as little water as possible. Pour the remainder of the boiling water on it, and simmer gently till thoroughly dissolved. Sweeten to taste, add the wine, lemon juice, and cinnamon. Strain into a mould, or several small cups, and set aside till cold.

A TRAVELLER in South Africa tells of a singular combat he witnessed. He was musing one morning with his eyes on the ground when he noticed a caterpillar crawling along at a rapid pace. Pursuing him was a host of small ants. Being quicker in their movements the ants would catch up with the caterpillar, and one would mount his back and bite him. Pausing, the caterpillar would turn his head and bite and kill his tormentors. After slaughtering a dozen or more of his persecutors the caterpillar showed signs of fatigue. The ants made a combined attack. Betaking himself to a stalk of grass, the caterpillar climbed up tail first, followed by the ants. As one approached he seized it in his jaws and threw it off the stalk. The ants, seeing that the caterpillar had too strong a position for them to overcome, resorted to strategy. They began sawing through the grass stalk. In a few minutes the stalk fell, and hundreds of ants pounced upon the caterpillar. He was killed at once, and the victors marched off in triumph, leaving the foe's body upon the field.

SWEETBREADS.—Sweetbreads require to be very carefully prepared before being cooked in any way. First soak them in lukewarm water to which a teaspoonful of vinegar has been added, changing the water two or three times, for an hour and a half. Then throw the sweetbreads into boiling water, and gently simmer for about seven minutes. After this cooking the flesh should be firm and round, but not hard. Then throw them into cold water for a quarter of an hour, wipe dry, and set aside till perfectly cold. After having been treated thus, sweetbreads may be cooked in a variety of ways for an invalid, as cut into slices and warmed in a well-flavoured white sauce. Another way is after cutting into slices to lightly fry the sweetbread, and then stew it very slowly in a thick brown gravy.

CHICKEN BROTH should be made, if possible, from an old bird, as it contains so much more nourishment, and all the necessaries for making good broth. Take a fowl, skin it, cut it up and lay in a jar with one blade of mace, half an onion, and a few peppercorns, cover it with cold water, tie a piece of greased paper over, and set in a pan of boiling water. Let it simmer for five hours, skimming well. Then strain, set aside till cold. Remove the fat, warm up, add salt, thicken with arrowroot and serve.

How to Cure Corpulency.—The main feature of fat in the animal body has been made the subject of much spirited discussion; on the one hand, it was contended that satisfactory evidence exists of the conversion of starch and saccharine substances into fat, by separation of carbon and oxygen, the change somewhat resembling that of the vinous fermentation; it was urged, per contra, that oily or fatty matter is invariably present in the food supplied to the domestic animals, and that this fat is merely absorbed and deposited in the body in a slightly modified state. The question has now been decided in favour of the first of these views, which was enunciated by Professor Liebig, the very chemist who formerly advocated the second opinion. By a series of very beautiful experiments, MM. Dumas and Milne Edwards proved that bees feeding exclusively upon sugar were still capable of producing wax. Dr. Ebstein advocates the use of fat in cases of corpulency, while other doctors, as high up the ladder of medical fame, recommend lean meats, while others worry the unhappy victims of obesity by insisting upon administering copious draughts of hot water, fasting, a most pernicious practice, we believe. Although so much has been written on this subject by the learned foreigners of the medical faculty, we can approve of no theory so effectual in the reduction of corpulency as the one advanced by Mr. F. C. Russell, the author of "Corpulency and the Cure" (two hundred and fifty-six pages), an interesting little brochure which can be bought for six stamps, from the publishers, at Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C. He goes in for facts and not fancies, and practically says, first ascertain your correct weight; then drink three doses of a vegetable compound, perfectly harmless, of a most agreeable flavour; then step upon a weighing-machine in twenty-four hours, and see if you have not lost two pounds or more of unhealthy fat. The book is well worth reading.—"Birmingham Daily Gazette."

A Positive Remedy for Corpulence.—Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. We have recently received a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled, "Corpulency and the Cure" (two hundred and fifty-six pages), and is a cheap issue (only sixpence), published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Our space will not do justice to this book; send for it yourself. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of the "Tablet," the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a Marchioness, writes from Madrid: 'My son, Count ——, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days sixteen kilos—i.e., thirty-four pounds.' Another writes: 'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes: 'I am just half the size.' A fourth: 'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost eight pounds in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes: 'A reduction of eighteen pounds in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes: 'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says: 'It reduced me considerably, not only in the body, but all over.'" The author is very positive. He says: "Step on a weighing-machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost two pounds in weight without the slightest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations."—"Cork Herald."

How to Reduce Obesity.—The corpulent will be glad to learn how to lose two stone in about a month with benefit to health, strength, and muscle by a comparatively new system. It is a singular fact that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto; yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. The "recipe" contained in the book "Corpulency and the Cure" (two hundred and fifty-six pages), can be had gratis from Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., by sending cost of postage, sixpence.—"Penny Illustrated Paper."

LONDON is at the present moment in the hands of a huge crowd of our American cousins. Whether you "walk to the right, or walk to the left, or walk in the middle of the road," as the song hath it, the soft musical twang of the educated American falls pleasantly on the ear, and this is what brings me to the point of my remarks. This friendly invasion of Brother Jonathan and his relations is not new; we have become accustomed to look for it, and to welcome it at this period of the year. Hotels "on the American plan" have sprung up, and epicurean tastes are turning in the direction of buckwheat cakes, ice-water, clam chowder, and canvas-back ducks; but never, never since America in London at seasontide has become one of the institutions of the country, have our American visitors of the male gender had a real "Ammurican" barber saloon—a tonsorial parlour, where they can get "a dandy haircut and other dude fixings"—at their command. It has remained to Messrs. H. P. Truefitt (Limited), of Old Bond Street, to supply this void in our civilisation, and after the usual manner and custom of the celebrated firm, they have done it right well. I can't describe it better, perhaps, than to say it is an American Shaving Parlour, in every sense of the term, and of course, of the very best class. That elegant run of bevelled mirrors, with the artistically carved pediments and ornaments in black walnut; the cases with the nickel fittings; and those massive and truly handsome Columbian revolving and reclining shaving chairs, upholstered in rich red Morocco leather, is all native work — made in America, of American materials. The spacious cup case, a distinguishing feature of American saloons, is here, also manufactured of rich American walnut "en suite," and its many compartments are already beginning to be filled by the special shaving materials, sacred to the owner's use. "Compactness and completeness" would seem to have been Mr. Truefitt's instructions to Messrs. Osborne, Garrett, & Co., when placing the onus of turning out this "real Ammurican s'loon" in their hands. Space in London, especially that part of London known as Old Bond Street, is a commodity of the order of preciousness, and so it was no palatial hall that Mr. Truefitt had at command; but it was an admirable apartment in many another way—it was shapely, lofty, and rejoiced in a magnificent top light. And so the work was commenced, and to-day every one is complimenting Mr. Truefitt on the perfectness of the success with which it has been brought to a completion. All good Americans, when they die, are said to go to Paris; but all good Americans come to London first, and I'm sure all good Americans who come to London will go to Messrs. H. P. Truefitt's (Limited) new saloon, there to luxuriate in tonsorial attentions by real American operators, under real American—and they are world-renowned—conditions.

MARKING LINEN.—The daughter of the late John Bond is justly celebrated for the marking ink which is manufactured in her name. It is most essential to get a good and well-known ink for marking linen, or probably all the trouble taken will be wasted, under the rigid course of washing adopted by laundresses. By sending for a bottle of this ink you will be compensated in two ways: Firstly, by getting the correct thing; and secondly, by a coupon which entitles the purchaser to their monogram or name rubber stamp. These stamps will last a lifetime, and are a marvel of cheapness and durability. The trade mark of this ink is "Crystal Palace," so do not get any other.

A VERY attractively designed Toilet Bracket has been lately placed before the public by a Birmingham firm, Messrs. Rippingille Brothers, of Samson Street Works. The size of the bracket is sixteen inches by ten inches, and being made in bronze it has a very neat appearance, is fitted with a roll of toilet paper with adjustable clip for refilling; a box for matches with striker; a bracket with socket for lamp or candle; a mirror, a receptacle for tobacco ash, et cetera, and a towel hook. The article with all its accessories is altogether very convenient and very complete, and bids fair to displace the somewhat clumsy articles of this kind which have hitherto been placed on the market.

FOR POTATO CROQUETTES take butter the size of an egg, beat it to a cream; add to it gradually two eggs, one teaspoonful of flour, one saltspoonful of salt, and six heaped tablespoonfuls of mashed potatoes which have been boiled and then peeled. Form this mass into sausage-shaped croquettes; dip them into beaten eggs, then in fine breadcrumbs, and fry in plenty of hot lard till a golden colour.

APPLE ROLLY POLY.—Make a suet crust, roll it out thinly, place slices of apple over it, sift sugar and grated lemon peel over the apple, roll up, pinch the ends very securely. Boil in a cloth, plunged into boiling water, and boil for two hours.

BAKING POWDER. The best that money can buy.

Third Series

SEPTEMBER, 1894,
CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED
Aug. 4, 11, 18, 25, & Sept. 1.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 68.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Prisoners of Silence. A Serial Story ... 97, 121, 145, 169,	193
Futtehpor-Sikri	102
Divination by Old Boots ...	108
The Flag. A Poem	109
The Beau's Stratagem. A Complete Story	110
Famous Jewels	126
Idlers Both. A Complete Story	132
Avignon. In Two Parts ...	135, 161
Women's Rights	150
Rhyming Words	156
Married to Order. A Serial Story 115, 139, 165, 187,	211
"Will you walk out with me, Miss?" A Complete Story ...	158
A Sunny Corner of Europe ...	174
The Story of a Little Child. A Complete Story	179
Some Regattas	183
Chicago in its Infancy ...	198
The Gem of the Ocean ...	204
Some Traditions of the Elders	209

Price ELEVENPENCE.

1894. LONDON 12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C. Nos. 292 to 296

GUARANTEED BITTERED FROM HOPS ONLY.

RIDGWAYS' TEAS. PERFECTION OF QUALITY & VALUE. KING WILLIAM ST., CITY, & BRANCHES. *Also AGENCIES IN MOST LARGE TOWNS.*

ROBINSON & CLEAVER, BELFAST.

Grand Diploma of Honour, Edinburgh, 1890; Two Prize Medals, Paris, 1889.

IRISH CAMBRIC

Samples and Illustrated Price Lists post free.

	per doz.		per doz.
Children's Bordered ..	1/3	Hemstitched.	
Ladies'	2/3	Ladies'	2/9
Gents'	3/3	Gents'	3/11

POCKET HANDKERCHIEFS.

LINEN COLLARS, CUFFS, AND SHIRTS.

COLLARS.—Ladies' 3-fold, from 3/6 per doz.; Gents 4-fold, 4/11 per doz. CUFFS.—For Ladies or Gentlemen, from 5/11 per doz. SHIRTS.—Best quality Longcloth, with 4-fold Linen Fronts, 35/6 per half doz. (to measure 2/- extra). Old Shirts made good as new, with best materials in neckbands, cuffs, and fronts, for 14/- the half doz.

IRISH DAMASK TABLE LINEN.

Fish Napkins, 2/11 per doz. Dinner Napkins, 5/6 per doz. Table Cloths, 2 yards square, 2/11; 2½ yards by 3 yards, 5/11 each. Kitchen Table Cloths, -/11½ each. Strong Huckaback Towels, 4/6 per doz. Frilled Linen Pillow Cases, from 1/2½ each.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER (By Special Appointments to the Queen and the Empress Frederick of Germany), Belfast.



BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH AND WASHING GLOVE.

Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion. Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED Rubber Bath and Flesh Brushes, price 5s. each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON; Ardwick, Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.

NO HOME COMPLETE OR SAFE WITHOUT.

Slung in all W.C. flush cisterns.

THE NEW DEODORISER.

Scentless, harmless, universal, perfect.

6d. "CONDITAS" 6d.

Free by Post. (A POWDER.) *Free by Post.*

PURIFIES tainted air, water, fish, meat, game, butter, poultry, cisterns, closets, drains, sewers, utensils, plants, animals, birds; grand for bath, toilet, mouth-wash, gargle, and breath drink. Perfect hygiene at last for everybody all the year round automatically washing and purifying.

Of all Stationers and Ironmongers.

163, BATTERSEA RISE, LONDON.

ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS.

John Noble, Ltd., the pioneers of the Revolution in Dressmaking, are now supplying

A LADY'S HOLIDAY SUIT for 15/-

Made in the John Noble Cheviot Serge (Navy Blue or Black); also in Grey or Drab Homespun Mixtures, and in Navy or Drab Twill Drill. Each suit consists of fashionable Open Coat and improved Bell Skirt, both finished with special quality Silk Cord.

Packed in box and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

THE JOHN NOBLE HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES, consisting of wide Bell Skirt and fashionable Blouse Bodice, trimmed Russia Braid, are supplied in the John Noble Cheviot Serge or Brown Linen Holland for 10/6 complete. Carriage 9d. extra. **10/6**

KNOCKABOUT FROCKS for GIRLS.

Lengths	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45 inches.
Price	1/6	2/-	2/6	3/-	3/6	4/-	4/6	5/-	5/6 each.

Postage 4½d. extra. Lengths stated are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt.

Write for Patterns and Illustrated "Book of the Serge," sent Post Free by

JOHN NOBLE, LTD., The Warehouse, 11, Piccadilly, **MANCHESTER.**

EPPS'S COCOAINE

COCOA-NIB EXTRACT.

(Tea-like).

The choicest roasted nibs (broken-up beans) of the natural Cocoa on being subjected to powerful hydraulic pressure, give forth their excess of oil, leaving for use a finely-flavoured powder—"Cocoaine," a product which, when prepared with boiling water, has the consistence of tea, of which it is now, with many, beneficially taking the place. Its active principle being a gentle nerve stimulant, supplies the needed energy without unduly exciting the system.

Sold in packets and tins, labelled:

JAMES EPPS and CO., Ltd.,

Homœopathic Chemists, London.

KEATING'S POWDER

DESTROYS BUGS FLEAS MOTHS BEETLES

Sold in Tins 6d 1/- & 2/6

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 297.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

THE groom who had been sent from Hatherleigh Grange to fetch Dr. Vallotson had evidently been told to hasten. The dog-cart bowled rapidly along, and in a few minutes it was clear of the town and surrounded by open country.

It was a perfectly cloudless October night. The moon was full, and in the cold radiance of her light every feature of the surrounding landscape stood out clear and distinct. There was a touch of frost in the air; and, in the wintry clearness of atmosphere thus created, white light and black shadow seemed to lie side by side sharply outlined. The stars were visible in myriads, twinkling and gleaming with that vivid, far-away brilliance which gives so much of its significance to a winter night; and in the almost leafless trees the bleak wind made a thin, toneless rustling. The cold, far-stretching expanse of earth; the cold, unfathomable depth of sky; seemed alike to radiate the chill beauty of inexorable power—a beauty almost alien to man, untouched either by tenderness or sympathy.

North Branston leaned back in his seat with folded arms, glancing neither to the right nor the left. He had hardly moved since the dog-cart left the town.

There is nothing which so stirs and renders poignant the sense of trouble or wrong as that recognition of its presence implied in offered sympathy. There is nothing so embittering as the act of rejecting sympathy. And yet there are times when such rejection is inevitable. There are times when the current of feeling—whether of resentment, suffering, or endurance—stirred by the sympathetic word, runs so much deeper than is conceived of by the speaker of that word, delicate and kindly though it may be, that communion between the two is almost impossible.

North Branston's refusal of the appointment offered him in London had been the bitterest task that had fallen to his lot for several years. It had galled him to the quick in the doing; it had galled every hour of his life since, and must continue to do so until time in its passing should have softened to some extent the keen edge of his feeling on the subject. Upon the unspeakable soreness of his spirit even Archdeacon French's sympathy had fallen as something trivial and inadequate. Its bitterness was not the attribute solely of the actual deed. It had its roots far back in the past; it was the growth of many years, and every thought and consciousness of his life had gone to its envenoming.

Of all the mysteries among which man moves in more or less petulant and unacknowledged ignorance, perhaps there is none more deeply shrouded in darkness than the laws which govern human sympathy and antipathy; those strange twin forces by which men and women are held asunder, or hurled together, as by a power other than their own wills. Sympathy is with us a household word; discoursed on, played with, abused. Antipathy is a less familiar plaything. The shadow of a weird and unknown power lies about it, and the thing suggested is not without its influence of awe. It is when this shadow lies between two people bound together by close ties of kindred that the terrible substance becomes evident for what it is; when to

the ties of blood life adds the ties of circumstance, the moral atmosphere created by that inexorable presence is the most poisonous a man can breathe.

In such an atmosphere North Branston had existed since his first childish consciousness had stirred in him. That nameless something which Alnchester had recognised in the relation between the woman and the child of years ago; which had stimulated interest and quickened curiosity; had been to the little taciturn boy as the very breath of his life. He knew it, with the unreasoning intuition of childhood, for what it was. He knew its source. The word sister was with him a synonym for a power against which there was no appeal; which worked perfunctorily for his good; spontaneously only when he was to be chidden, repulsed, ignored; an adverse power, in fact. Little North Branston repaid that power not with fear, but with an answering antipathy; a chill, childish repugnance which nothing seemed to move, until, as childhood passed away, it developed into the active antagonism of quick-witted, dogmatic youth.

Before this second stage was reached the changes and chances of life had so operated as to loosen, as it seemed, the bonds of circumstance which held the two together. They were no longer alone together. Marriage had given to the one new connections, wider and different interests; the other was sent out into the world of strangers where he might have found sympathy and given affection. But the changes and chances of life proved powerless before the mysterious laws of antipathy. The married woman with husband, child, household cares, social interests; the schoolboy with all his schoolboy's duties, pleasures, friends; seemed to be drawn each out of the world in which they might have lived apart and at peace; and to be held together in an isolating chain of opposition which neither might break. North Branston's youth was one blind, fierce, unspoken struggle to accomplish the impossible; to break the chain that held him, and to escape into a purer air. He was at war with his world. Mrs. Vallotson's household took its tone from its mistress, and North was an alien and a scapegoat to every member of it; a thorn in the flesh to the master of the house; a charitable investment from whom, as he was never allowed to forget, heavy returns would be exalted. His holidays were one long rankling feud. He carried his bitterness of spirit back to school, and was morose and unpopular. His constant triumphs in his school work were for himself alone. Failure would have been visited upon him, but his success was of interest to no one.

Boyhood passed and left him, as it had found him, bound and powerless. The bitter tide of rebellion which had surged up in him during those boyish years, sank gradually into a dead level of acceptance which was infinitely more bitter in its changeless gloom, and as entirely blind and unconscious. Nobody traced the course of that subsidence. Nobody considered what it implied, or the passage from boyhood to manhood that it involved. If it was vaguely realised in Dr. Vallotson's household that North Branston was less aggressively disagreeable as he grew older, it produced no other effect. No one was interested to discover upon what manner of personality that poisoned air had acted, what manner of man it had developed. That North Branston was hard, cynical, and indifferent, was a fact patent to all who knew him; but it was a fact that suggested nothing beyond.

The influence that had shadowed his childhood and soured his youth closed inexorably about his manhood, and he subscribed grimly to its decrẹe as to the inevitable. It was Mrs. Vallotson's will that North Branston should repay her husband by entering into partnership with him. At seven-and-twenty he turned his back deliberately on the promise of an exceptionally brilliant career, to bury himself in a little country town. He turned his back, also, on the hope of freedom, drawn and compelled unconsciously and involuntarily by the mysterious power which dominated him; and the two so strangely held together—whom no absence, no diversity of interests had severed—were brought once more into the contact of that everyday life which goes on without change or respite month after month, year in, year out.

What the four years that followed had been to North Branston is to be inferred from his reception of the offer of that London appointment to which Archdeacon French had alluded. A fierce acknowledgement of the futility of the life he led, of its hopeless failure from every point of view, of its unnecessary misery, rose in him and became a resolution to end it, to accept the chance offered him and to go away. When he went to Mrs. Vallotson on the evening following his return with Constance, he went, little as he realised it, braced to face

the evil influence of his life, to break it and throw it aside for ever.

His resolution had broken in his hands, his determination had slipped from him unheeded, withered and killed by a breath which seemed to blow up through his life from the remotest days of his childhood, gathering as it came that before which nothing could live. And in the atmosphere it brought about him he ceased to be of value even to himself.

He refused the appointment, and the actual refusal was as a drop in the ocean of his bitterness. The grinding sense of failure, the pitiless reaction from conqueror to conquered, above all the scorching, blighting touch of that poisonous breath, had scored his every nerve.

The dog-cart bowled along through the frosty air, the ring of the horse's hoofs on the dry road sounding out hard and distinct; it turned sharply round a corner, through an open lodge gate, and stopped before the entrance to a large house of the Tudor style of architecture; in the all-revealing moonlight every outline and every mullion stood out sharp and distinct, and every pane of glass reflected back the weird, white light. The drive swept round in a wide semicircle, and beyond stretched the open country, well wooded here, and with the river winding its way among the trees.

In another moment the door was opened.

"I am Dr. Branston," said North. "Dr. Vallotson's partner."

The circumstances of Sir William Karslake's introduction to Dr. Vallotson had created no interest in his present patient in North Branston's mind. It was simply a "case" of Dr. Vallotson's that he had come to see; a case yielded to him with a reluctance which had, by the law of contraries, invested it for him with a certain contemptibility; a case, according to Dr. Vallotson's diagnosis, entirely uninteresting from a professional point of view, and largely attended with valetudinarianism. He followed the footman through the fine old hall; up the wide, softly-carpeted staircase; and across a landing, without a glance at his surroundings, though the decoration about him was both rich enough and in sufficiently admirable taste to attract attention. His guide stopped and knocked rather nervously at a closely shut door; after a moment's uncertain pause he opened it, and announced in a subdued and tentative voice:

"Dr. Branston!"

It was a large bedroom into which North Branston advanced. On the dainty dressing-table were sundry woman's trifles, and its appointments were those of a lady's toilet. At the farther end of the room a second doorway led, as it seemed, into a dressing-room; the door was only partly opened, and through the aperture a woman's figure was vaguely discernible. The only occupant of the room itself was a figure of which North could see only one long, thin hand, which rested on the arm of the high-backed, wide-winged arm-chair by which the rest of the person was concealed. Towards this arm-chair, drawn up before a blazing wood fire, North advanced.

"Dr. Branston? Who the deuce is Dr. Branston? Where's Vallotson? Why the dickens——"

North Branston came round in front of the arm-chair, and the voice stopped suddenly. At the same instant North also came to a standstill. A curious flash of keen professional expression leapt in his deep-set eyes. There was an instant's unconscious pause while the doctor and patient surveyed one another.

The figure in the chair was that, judging from his length of limb, of a tall, spare man who was lying rather than sitting propped up by many cushions in a singularly collapsed attitude. He was wrapped in the ample folds of a loose dressing-gown, and from its dark colouring, and against the dull red of the chair behind, his face and head stood out with startling distinctness. His straight, clear-cut features — the features, in their normal condition, as North's quick eyes told him, of a remarkably handsome man of fifty-five or thereabouts—were pinched and drawn; great drops as of exhaustion or pain stood on his forehead, and the disordered grey hair hung damp and heavy; about his mouth and eyes were faint, blue-grey shadows; and his blue eyes had a misty, unseeing look.

The pause, so brief as to be hardly perceptible, was broken by North Branston.

"I am Dr. Vallotson's partner," he said quietly. "Dr. Vallotson is unfortunately laid up, and I am here in his place."

Sir William Karslake moved slightly and feebly, as with a courteous acknowledgement.

"You are very good," he said. His voice was painfully strained, but no irritability appeared in it; nothing but the courtesy of a very polished gentleman. "May I ask you to find yourself a chair?"

He spoke slowly and with considerable difficulty, and as he paused a slight sound behind him made North turn his head quickly and involuntarily. An indefinite recollection of the woman's figure of which he had caught sight in the room beyond, and an equally indefinite impression of a womanly presence conveyed by the appointments of the bedroom, created in him a vague expectancy, and he waited, with his hand on the chair on which he had proposed to seat himself.

The woman who emerged from the dressing-room, however, was evidently a superior servant; a staid, elderly woman.

"I ought to apologise," his patient went on, as North seated himself, "for bringing you so far at such an hour. But—I have been—in some distress."

The dignified tones were growing yet weaker and more difficult, and North, with a quick gesture which put the apology by, leaned forward, his keen eyes scanning the other man's face, his lips parted to speak. Before the words were uttered, the face on which his eyes were fixed changed slowly. Its drawn lines became convulsed; the grey shadows about the mouth and eyes stole gradually over the whole face; the limp, inert figure became tense and rigid; and Sir William Karslake's very consciousness seemed to be crushed out in the grip of a spasm of mortal agony.

A word from North brought the woman in the background to his side.

"How often has this happened?" he said brusquely.

"Never so bad as to-night, sir," was the prompt answer. The woman was rather pale, but quite composed. "Sir William is subject to little attacks, but I've never seen him as he's been to-night, and I always wait on him when he is unwell, sir."

An hour later North stood with his hand on the latch of the bedroom door, glancing back into the room. He paused a moment, listening to the slow, faint breathing which came from the bed on which his patient lay; then with a gesture of assurance to the woman, who was sitting by the bedside, he opened the door and went out on to the landing, closing the door quietly behind him.

He hesitated a moment, and looked about him rather uncertainly. He was just moving in the direction of the staircase when another door opened, and a neat lady's-maid came quickly towards him.

"My lady wished me to say that she would be glad to see you before you go, sir," she said.

"I was going to enquire for Lady Karslake," returned North. "I should like to see her at once."

The girl turned quickly and led the way downstairs and across the hall. She opened a door and announced:

"The doctor, if you please, my lady."

There was a sudden soft rustle, and as North Branston came round the screen by which the room was protected from the door, he became aware that a tall, slight woman's figure was facing him from the hearthrug on the other side of the room. North was too well accustomed to encountering the unexpected in the exercise of his profession to experience more than a passing sense of surprise as he became aware in the same instant that Lady Karslake was a young woman; and he had realised little further when she received him with a quick, careless little bend of her head.

"My husband is better?" she said. "I am afraid he has been very ill!" She spoke in an eager, impulsive fashion, to which a touch of gracious dignity which pervaded it gave an indefinable charm; and her voice was singularly sweet and fresh. North Branston answered her with grave composure.

"He is better," he said, "for the time being. But I am sorry to have to tell you that he is still very ill. If you will kindly give the necessary orders, I should like to send a prescription in to Alnchester with as little delay as possible."

She turned very pale, and looked at him for a moment in wide-eyed silence. Then she turned with quick, graceful movements; and rang the bell sharply, passing on across the room to a writing-table. She took out paper and envelopes and said:

"Will you write here?" adding to the servant who had answered her summons: "Let one of the grooms be ready at once to ride to Alnchester. Come back for the note as soon as you have let them know."

The man disappeared, and she walked to the fireplace, standing there with one hand resting on the high mantelpiece, her back to North Branston as he wrote.

She was dressed in some sort of soft pinkish stuff made in the fashion of a tea-gown, and the delicate draperies, moving as she moved, and falling now in dainty folds about her, seemed to suit her and to express her as no harder outlines could have done. From the crown of her head to the sole of her shoe she was essentially feminine; feminine in her graceful, impulsive move-

ments, feminine in her graceful, self-possessed repose, feminine in every change that passed across her mobile face and in every cadence of her musical voice. The charmingly-appointed little room in which she stood, with all its dainty tokens of comfort and refinement pervaded with that indefinable air of common use, was a fitting setting and no more for the vague charm which hung about her. In figure she was tall and slight, as has been said. The head was rather small, and its poise upon her shoulders was one which people called proud or spirited, according to the mood of its owner. She had quantities of waving fair hair bound round the back of her head, now, in a vague and picturesque fashion which harmonised with her gown, and little soft tendrils curled over her forehead. It was a broad forehead, delicately white and smooth, and the beautifully-pencilled eyebrows were several shades darker than her hair. Her features themselves were by no means striking, yet there were many people who described Lady Karslake as "lovely"; again, the adjective was a question of mood; she had unquestionably beautiful eyes, which were sometimes grey, sometimes black, sometimes a dark, deep blue. Her expression changed, it sometimes seemed, with every passing thought; but its sensitiveness seemed to be rather that of a quick temperament than of strong feelings.

The servant re-entered the room, North rose from the writing-table, and she moved and spoke over her shoulder to the latter.

"Please give your own orders," she said.

She spoke with the careless, gracious authority natural to womanhood which has always been deferred to. She waited while North gave the man his instructions in a few brief and concise words, and then, as the door closed upon the servant, she turned.

"My husband has never been so ill as this before," she said. "Is it—something fresh? Will it soon pass off?"

She was looking straight at North with her delicate eyebrows slightly contracted and her eyes very dark; and North advanced to her with a certain approving response in his own eyes which made them a shade less indifferent than usual. He knew that not many women would have acted first and asked questions afterwards.

"There appears to be a complication which I had not been led to expect," he said. "The condition involved is one which is not likely to yield immediately to treatment. The attack of to-night is a symptom only of serious illness."

She lifted her head with a quick gesture of distress which was rather pity and regret than acute personal grief.

"Ah!" she said, in a low, impulsive tone. "Poor thing! That is dreadful!" She paused a moment and then said hurriedly, and only just above her breath, her eyes dilating: "He has had frightful pain, hasn't he?" Then as North assented rather grimly, "Ah!" she said again, with a little shuddering breath almost of repulsion. "Poor dear thing!"

She turned away sharply, and there was a moment's silence. North Branston, as he watched her, seemed to be studying the specimen of womanhood before him. Then she said suddenly and solicitously:

"You find Pike a good nurse? She takes care of him properly?"

North Branston looked at her for a moment, and a little contemptuous smile touched his lips. The expression of his eyes indicated that his response was dictated by experimental instincts.

"She seems to be a most competent person," he said composedly. "But if you would prefer to take her place by-and-by——"

She turned swiftly and confronted him, repudiation and distaste which was almost horror in every line of her face.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed breathlessly. "I couldn't! I don't know anything about nursing, I—" She met his eyes and stopped suddenly. A quick flash of comprehension leapt up in her own, and the dismay in her face melted into a laugh—the half-deprecating, half-wilful laugh of a woman who has never been found fault with.

"That was too bad of you," she said. "I see you quite understand what a hopeless nurse I should make! I can't help feeling it is fortunate for my husband that he does not like to have me in his room when he is ill."

She laughed slightly and very musically, and then glanced round at the clock on the mantelpiece.

"You said he was asleep, I think?" she said, just a touch of concern returning to the half negligence, half dignity of her tone. "You will wait, perhaps, for the medicine from Alnchester before you go back to him?"

"Thank you," returned North Branston. "Yes. It will be better not to run the risk of disturbing him before the man comes back."

He spoke rather mechanically, and a certain distinctly nonplussed expression produced by her reception of his covert sarcasm remained unchanged. She pointed him to a chair with a careless gesture, and sat down in the low, wide arm-chair from which she had risen on his entrance.

North Branston seated himself in silence.

There was a pause. Lady Karslake leaned back, her hands clasped tightly together on her knee, looking contemplatively before her. North Branston was adjusting his ideas. The process, presumably, was hardly completed when his hostess turned her head in his direction, and said suddenly:

"Are you a native of Alnchester?"

North moved abruptly, and brought his deep-set eyes to bear, as circumstances demanded, on her face. He answered the characteristically direct question as concisely as it was asked.

"No!" he said. "But I have lived there since I was five years old."

She looked at him for a moment, her grey eyes very critical and full of an easy penetration.

"Ah!" she ejaculated. "Now what advantages you men have! If you had been a girl, what an unspeakable destiny those words would convey!"

She laughed, looking at him with a tacit claim on his comprehension, a tacit assurance that he must agree with her; and almost in spite of himself North Branston smiled sardonically.

"Male advantages have their limits, unfortunately," he returned.

Her eyebrows moved quickly, and she paused a moment.

"You are a much-to-be-pitied section of society, you men," she said, with a light, half-mocking note in her voice. In the perfect security of that womanliness which invested her without effort, with a dignity which seemed as inalienable a part of her as her speech or her gesture, she was as careless in her graciousness as only unassailable dominion can be. "But consider! A girl in your position would probably not only have lived in Alnchester; she would have grown there! She would have developed there—save the mark! She would have gone on little visits now and then, I suppose, or she would have gone to a little school, perhaps. And she would have come back to Alnchester as to the centre of the universe. Now you——" she glanced at him again, "you—have not grown in Alnchester, I presume?"

"No!" he answered; his tone was grimly responsive. "I have not had that proud privilege! I'm afraid you don't think much of Alnchester?"

She laughed lightly and waved her hand expressively.

"On the contrary," she said, "I think a great deal of it! I have never seen a place the society of which gave me so much to ponder. I have been trying to decide whether there is any one essential quality necessary for social intercourse, and if so, what it is? I used to think that mutual amusement was the idea, but I know now that that is a fallacy. The Alnchester people don't amuse one another; they don't appear to wish to amuse one another; they don't appear to wish to be amused! Why do they ever meet?"

"To discuss one another," suggested North, as a man humours something too confident and, though he may not acknowledge the fact, too charming to be repressed.

"Have you never seen a cathedral town before, Lady Karslake?"

Lady Karslake shook her head.

"Never," she said. "I've lived in London and Paris, and I know something of Vienna, but I've never made the acquaintance of an Alnchester until now."

"I am afraid you will find Hatherleigh rather dull," said North; he was watching her face now with a look on his face in marked contrast to its usual indifference, and with a little satirical twist about his mouth.

Her eyes flashed with a smile.

"No," she said easily. "I've never been dull—not even on a yacht. It must be a dreadful state of things. Something or some one always amuses me—or I amuse myself. Do you find Alnchester dull?"

She was looking at him with a smile, but her eyes held a certain comprehension which had grown in them as they talked. And North Branston, meeting them, answered almost without knowing it.

"Perhaps I do," he said. "A little."

THE CITY OF THE NIZAM.

THE yellow minarets of Hyderabad soar above the grey wastes of the stony Deccan, and prick the hot blue sky which canopies the windswept tableland. This barbaric city of the wilderness possesses a unique interest as the capital of the Nizam, greatest of Indian Princes, and England's most important native ally. The salient features

of Hyderabad retain their original sharpness of outline and freshness of colour, unmodified by the levelling influences of the Western world, hitherto untempted by civil or commercial enterprise to encroach upon the rocky territory of the Nizam's dominion.

Ruined forts crown frowning cliffs of granite and syenite, which vary the mournful monotony of tumbled crags stretching away on every side to the azure rim of a limitless horizon. The weird chaos suggests the wreck of a prehistoric world; and rude circles of upright slabs, surrounded by hundreds of rocking-stones, cromlechs, and druidical-looking altars, point to the vast sepulchre of some forgotten creed, buried beneath the dust of ages beyond hope or possibility of excavation. Through the glassy transparency of the shadowless atmosphere, the purple precipice of distant Golconda stands out in bold relief, and the eye ranges over a wide tract of desolate country, every detail being defined with microscopic distinctness, as though revealed through a magic mirror. Brown huts, thatched with plaited palm-leaves, nestle beneath sheltering heights wherever a shallow stream fertilises a green oasis in the rock-strewn desert; the bamboo-fringed banks of the stony watercourse are bordered by lines of rose-red millet; there are trenches of pale green rice and bushes white with fluffy pods of ripening cotton, each precious crop protected by a brown boy, who raises a deafening clatter from his stone "macham," a platform erected for the scaring of marauding kites and crows. When the brilliant moonbeams chequer the desolate wilderness into alternate breadths of inky shadow and mellow light, the spiritual beauty of the radiant night invests the wild scene with the mystic charm realised by the Hindu lover, who uses the term, "fragment of the moon," as the supreme expression of endearment addressed to his dusky "dil-koosh." The brooding hush of the slumbering world, though riven ever and anon by the wild laugh of the hyena and the sobbing shriek of the jackal, closes in again with deepened intensity as their gaunt shadows flit across the flood of moonlight, which turns the thorny spikes of jagged cactus and swordlike aloe into glistening bars of purest silver. At length a rosy flush suffuses the opalescent pallor of the eastern sky, and the icy chill of the "Dam-i-subh"—"the breath of dawn"—steals across the waking earth. Human habitations become more frequent, and the scanty fields of native villages contain life-sized groups of those sculptured horses which represent the materialistic pantheism of popular religion in Southern India. These steeds of carven stone, dedicated to Aruna—the dawn—suggest a possible identity with the traditional horses of Apollo, and indicate the derivation of the classical sun-myth from an Indian source. Sometimes a solitary shape looms out in gigantic proportions from a background of dark foliage, and represents Uchasrava, the fabulous steed of Hindu mythology, hypothetically created at the beginning of the world.

A blue lake reflects the glowing sky, and gilded crescents above dome and minaret sparkle in the early sunshine as we approach the Nizam's picturesque capital.

A heterogeneous crowd fills the railway station, for although Hyderabad remains a Moslem stronghold, every Indian race and creed may be found amidst the cosmopolitan population of the Nizam's territory. The strong British outpost of Secunderabad, chosen from prudential considerations as our own head-quarters, occupies the opposite shore of a magnificent tank many miles in circumference. This noble sheet of water was an artificial contrivance by which a Prince of olden times beautified his capital and cooled the burning air of the elevated plateau exposed to the blinding blaze of the scorching Indian sun. Seven thousand British troops defend the complicated interests of our Indian Empire on the edge of this debateable land, and also protect the life and property of the Nizam, which are perpetually endangered by the plots and cabals which render Hyderabad a teeming hotbed of subtle political intrigue.

In the perfect winter climate of the Deccan the sun-steeped air of a December morning seems an elixir of life as we drive into Hyderabad, passing the battlemented walls of the palatial Chudderghat, occupied by Her Majesty's representative at the Court of the Nizam. The Resident's responsible position demands perpetual vigilance and special qualifications of judgement and discretion, in addition to a thorough comprehension of native life and character, conditions amply fulfilled by the present nominee of the British Government.

Diverging tracts dotted with gaily-clad foot-passengers, mounted soldiers, and strings of camels traverse the stony uplands and lead to the city gates. Elephants are bathing in a shallow river, squirting the water from their curving trunks, and startling our horses with their unwieldy

gambols, until the ramshackle carriage is in imminent danger of being upset by the erratic team. Decorated boats skim over the broad blue lake, and embark a freight of white-veiled ladies at the marble steps of a waterside palace belonging to the Royal Zenana. His Highness the Nizam has been breakfasting with the fair inmates, his gilded carriage and outriders waiting for him at the gate which faces the road. The suspicious atmosphere of Eastern cities constrains native rulers to avoid public notice, and a barbaric-looking troop armed with the huge muskets known as "line-sweepers" orders every loitering group to move on, so that when the Royal cavalcade sweeps past in a cloud of dust, the momentary glimpse of a dark face under a glittering turban conveys no distinct impression of the tributary Prince, whose anomalous position renders his future destiny at the hands of England an almost insoluble problem. The apparently unproductive wastes of the Deccan are so heavily taxed that the lot of the peasants resembles that of the Egyptian fellaheen under Turkish administration; and the native agriculturist frequently compares the condition of the Nizam's dominion with that of the states under British sway, greatly to the advantage of the latter. The native Prince proved his loyalty to England by a substantial contribution of sixty lacs of rupees from his vast revenues for the protection of the Indian frontier in the campaign of 1887, but the abuses of a Mohammedan Government are painfully apparent, and the unbridled luxury of Oriental life, with the uncontrolled exercise of almost irresponsible power, write indelible traces on mind and character. The young Nizam, though under thirty years of age, looks as though he had left life's meridian far behind, for rapidity of physical developement in an Indian climate possesses the melancholy antithesis of premature decay. English influence has reduced the members of the Royal Zenana to a third of the original number; pressure having been applied by the Imperial power in consequence of the time required for the adjustment of disputes among the rival beauties, and the necessity of the Nizam's closer attention to affairs of State.

The untameable character of the Mohammedan conquerors stamped a distinct seal of individuality upon Hyderabad. When the tide of invasion swept across the Indian peninsula, the flower of the army was borne on the crest of the wave which inundated these southern plains, and almost effaced the weaker personality of the aboriginal inhabitants. The dominant position achieved by the fierce northern pioneers is retained by their modern descendants, superior as they are in mental and physical force to the races which their forefathers overcame.

Within the white arches of a colossal gateway the Saracenic colonnades of the crowded city frame a surging sea of dazzling colour surmounted by the yellow domes of towering mosques. Green plumes of palm rise from fountain-filled palace quadrangles guarded by turbaned Arabs with shining spears, and Bougainvillea throws a mantle of royal purple over dusky arch and crumbling wall. The gilded and painted arcades of the many-coloured streets flash with stores of gold and silver embroidery or gleaming tinsel on a surface of orange or scarlet; and inscriptions in Persian, Arabic, and Hindustani over the low white shops denote the presence of the mingled races which contribute to the pictorial effect of the Oriental capital. The centre of the converging streets is known as the "Char Minar"—the "Four Minarets"—and consists of a superb vaulted gateway of saffron-tinted stone, the summit surrounded by a fretted arcade, and the sides pierced with tiers of graceful lancets. Four tapering minarets flank the massive structure, and the pale yellow shafts cleaving the burning blue of the Indian sky form a noble architectural climax to the picturesque city. The Char Minar commemorates a Persian princess, loved and lost by the Moslem monarch who erected the monumental gateway in the midst of the capital, so that all who passed beneath the shadow of the lofty minarets might breathe a prayer for the departed soul.

In the densely-thronged streets the scantily-clad negro, with a scarlet "tarboosh" perched on his woolly locks, jostles the dignified Mohammedan, true lord of the soil, in snowy turban and flowing robes; the long-haired, eagle-featured Afghan strides alongside of the fanatical Hadji, whose green headgear shows that he has accomplished the sacred pilgrimage to distant Mecca; and martial Rajputs dash past on fiery chargers, dispersing a gossiping group of Sidis leaning like ebony statues against the marble basin of the great fountain which faces the Char Minar. A devout son of the Prophet laves his face in the silver spray before spreading out his prayer-carpet for the noonday

orisons, as the turbaned head of the Muezzin appears on the gallery of every minaret, and the cry "La Allah-il-Allah" rings across the city. A Rohilla chieftain with a jewelled dagger thrust through a dark-blue caftan, swings the heavy blunderbuss described in native parlance as "the tiger's child," and pushes aside a barbaric-looking Pathan with a leathern shield, apparently sported as the insignia of full dress, like a sword in a ball-room. Olive-skinned Hindus glide stealthily through the crowd, as though shrinking from contact with the motley assemblage. Solemn Turks sit cross-legged beside their coffee stalls, and keen-faced Parsees with sloping oil-skin hats are engrossed with the arithmetical calculations so successfully mastered by these astute descendants of the ancient Persians, in their modern character of "the Jews of India." A few Parsee ladies with silken "sáris" of cherry colour, lilac, or apple-green, thrown back from white headbands inscribed with sacred texts, drive through the bazaars, but the absence of women from the crowded thoroughfares results from the cloistered seclusion of the "purdah," which imprisons the majority of the fair sex. The few female pedestrians consist of low-caste Hindus or Mohammedan servants thickly veiled, and though a white hand pushes aside the brocaded curtains of a passing litter, a glance into the cushioned interior is only rewarded by the sight of a shapeless bundle swathed in voluminous folds of snowy muslin.

The flashing eyes, bearded faces, and warlike bearing of the Nizam's Moslem subjects show the identity of this alien race with the vast hordes which poured across the mountains of Cabul; and the peculiar formation of the mouth, with full red lips parted over prominent rows of glistening teeth, betokens barbaric origin, and gives a savage expression to the strongly-marked features. Almost every one is armed to the teeth; and the spears, sabres, daggers, and pistols, which gleam amid the white and crimson robes, or bristle in sash and turban, convert the entire city into a formidable armoury. Bazaars filled with deadly weapons brighten dim alley and mouldering arcade with the polished steel and burnished brass of a hundred unfamiliar native instruments of attack and defence. Sheaves of slender Persian rapiers are held in place by the sharp sickles of murderous, double-edged scimitars; and swords with watered blades of fabulous value fence off a jagged heap of pointed "serotis" and crooked "talwars." A strong handle of twisted camel sinew guides the yielding blade of the subtle "jambia," narrowing to a vicious-looking hook; and the turbaned armourer leaves his anvil to show us the needle-like "karoli," minute enough to be concealed in the palm of the hand, and used by distraught lovers to inflict the wounds provoked by jealousy or disappointment. Spiky "marus" of sharpened black buckshorn, and piercing blades known as "bichwas," or "scorpions," fill a brazen tray; and a bundle of elephant-goads, inlaid with ebony and silver, leans against a stack of shining spears. Daggers curved and straight, rough and smooth, jagged and pointed, show endless possibilities of inflicting every degree of punishment, from a death-blow to a scratch, from the severing of an artery to a puncture deep and deadly, but small enough to defy detection. The muslin turbans of the passing multitudes are thickly set with inlaid daggers and glittering blades. The merchant who smokes his narghileh among green and purple bales of costly embroidery carries a sharp stiletto behind his ear, and pricks off a list of goods with this warlike implement. A haughty-looking noble on a richly caparisoned elephant examines the temper of a huge sword which he draws from a jewelled scabbard as he rides on his way; and a money-lender, chinking the heavy native rupees into a silver bowl, looks up as a curtained palanquin darkens his doorway, and offers the caller a parchment scroll on the shaft of a long knife without rising from his seat.

Unfortunately for Hyderabad, the bristling fence of daggers and firearms in belt and turban is neither a merely ornamental adjunct to native costume, nor an Indian expression of the modern motto, "defence not defiance." The mental temperature stands ever at fever-heat, and the city smoulders on the edge of perpetual insurrection, the inextinguishable fires of anarchy and fanaticism continually blazing out with devastating fury. The yellow flag of the Nizam, which waves above his stately palaces, bears the homely device of a white "chupatty," or native loaf. One of these unleavened cakes was offered by a saintly Dervish to a former monarch as a pledge of success on the eve of battle, and the victory won was ascribed to the sacred "chupatty" thenceforth adopted as the Royal badge of Hyderabad. The interior of the palaces is forbidden ground, now that His Highness is in residence, for the

caprices of this spoilt child of fortune create constant uncertainty as to which of the magnificent piles of stone and marble will be honoured by the Royal presence at any given hour, and the rapidity with which the Prince's commands are obeyed ensures the possibility of several palaces being visited in the course of a single day. The Royal stables—with their splendid stud of Arab, English, and Turkish horses, in addition to mules, camels, and elephants—are thrown open to the public. The four hundred horses alone represent an outlay of enormous wealth, and the barbaric array of gorgeous howdahs, lofty camel-carriages, and gilded State equipages, with their rich trappings of red and gold, is sobered by the subdued colouring of luxurious English broughams and barouches.

English grooms and coachmen mingle with the turbaned crowd of native servants, for the Nizam prides himself upon the superficial acquaintance of English manners and customs which now gives the finishing touch to the hybrid education of an Indian Prince. Through the Royal gardens, with their crowding palms and marble tanks full of alligators, a broad avenue leads to the noble racecourse outside the city. The massive grand-stand and gay kiosks command extensive views of the breezy Deccan, with the suburban palaces of the Nizam and his nobles rising above blue lake and rugged hill. The stately castle of Palinknoma, built of pure white marble, crowns a grey cliff with a diadem of shining towers, and the gilded spires of the Prime Minister's palace gleam above a thicket of feathery palms. This princely mansion—lined with plate-glass, and decorated with furniture of crystal—resembles some enchanted hall of fairyland, or a palace of the "Arabian Nights," when filled with the splendid pageantry of an Oriental court. The banquets of Hyderabad present a scene of unparalleled magnificence, with their superb gold plate and glowing flowers, the thousands of twinkling lights paled by the fire of the jewels which blaze on robes of State and silken turbans, as the Nizam and his satellites pass between ranks of gleaming spears to the sound of the martial music which heralds the Royal entrance. Beyond the extensive Zoological Gardens, a specialty of Indian cities under native rule, lies the picturesque Begum Bazaar, glowing with colour and palpitating with the passionate life of the barbaric capital. Brightly-coloured groups laugh, talk, and quarrel round the gaudy shops and quaint stalls, sheltered from the sun by scarlet and green umbrellas or yellow fronds of dried palm. Furious brawls are of frequent occurrence, and the knives and daggers of the populace flash in and out of sheath and sash with dangerous readiness, as shrieks of rage and threatening gestures turn the arcaded streets of the great bazaar into a pandemonium of uproar and excitement. A second great tank, known as the lake of Meer Alim, shows the black smoke of a steamer staining the azure purity of sky and water, and bringing the prosaic reality of Western commercial life into the living romance of the shining East. Although Hyderabad remains at present unshorn of the brilliant accessories which transport the spectator into the scenes of Oriental fable, the leaven of European influence must eventually produce the invariable result of toning down the vivid tints and projecting angles of native life and character into the dead level of monotonous uniformity, which already blights the beauty of more than half the world.

An expedition to Golconda is "de rigueur" with every visitor to Hyderabad. The great fortress captured by the Moslem hordes is now commanded by Afsur Jung, the Nizam's aide-de-camp, upon whom the British Government has bestowed the unusual honour of a commission as Major in the English army. The accomplished commandant of Golconda has risen to his brilliant military and social position from the obscure rank of a Sepoy, and was promoted in the first instance for his marvellous horsemanship. A courteous permission to see the interior of the fort is given in perfect English, with the offer of a Royal carriage for the excursion, and armed with Major Afsur Jung's visiting card we start for the fortress-crowned height beyond the grey domes of the pyramidal tombs. The pale pink flush, termed in Hindu poetry "the bloom of the East," suffuses the morning sky, and the tinkling of distant bells vibrates through the crystalline atmosphere, as a laden camel on the edge of a granite ridge is defined in sharp silhouette against the horizon.

A drive of ten miles across the rocky wilderness brings us to the colossal monuments of the Nizams, commonly called "the Tombs of the Kings." Ancient cypresses shadow the broad stone platform which surrounds each mighty sepulchre, approached by moss-grown steps worn by thousands of passing feet. Our own footsteps echo mournfully through the silence of every vast interior, where sword and

turban, carved upon a granite slab beneath the dome, mark the resting-place of a departed Prince. Sometimes the graves of wives and children encircle the Royal tomb, and the nasal chant of a Dervish prostrate in the sculptured niche which faces Mecca shows that the monument is still a place of prayer. These majestic memorials of the Royal dead are gradually crumbling into ruin, and are left in the state of neglect and decay which frequently characterises a Mohammedan burial-ground, for the stern creed of Islam, unmodified here by the softening influences which prevailed in Northern India, fails to inculcate that human tenderness which guards the grave of a loved one. Exposed to wind and sun on the bleak hillside, and swept by the fierce burst of the wild monsoon, the stately tombs of Golconda are rapidly losing the chiselled clearness of outline and sharpness of detail generally associated with the chastened beauty of Mogul architecture.

The shallow depression in the rocks forms the glen of Golconda familiarised to the world by the pages of the "Arabian Nights," for this is the identical Valley of Diamonds into which Sindbad the Sailor threw joints of meat to the hovering vultures attracted hither by the sparkling jewels which strewed the ground. When the nests were discovered by this hero of our childhood, who tracked the birds as they flew homeward on leaden wings after their feast, myriads of diamonds embedded in the moss and twigs dazzled his wondering eyes. The fantastic fable rests on a foundation of fact, for the jewels of Golconda were proverbial in the remotest ages of Eastern antiquity, and modern deductions of mining engineering science infer the probability of their continued existence beneath the domed sepulchres which almost monopolise the famous site of this natural laboratory. Almost all the great diamonds of the world were found in this enchanted spot, the whilom birthplace of the Kohinoor, still the supreme "Mountain of Light," though reduced by unskilful cutting when in the possession of the Emperor Aurungzebe from the original weight of seven hundred and ninety-three carats to one hundred and eighty-six carats only. Another famous diamond of triangular form, weighing ninety carats, and known as the "Nassak," was seized by the Marquis of Hastings at the conquest of the Deccan. The last Golconda diamond of extraordinary size and value was "the Nizam," which glitters in the Crown of Hyderabad. This superb stone, picked up by a native shepherd at the entrance of a deserted mine, and worth one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, though only in a fragmentary state, was split by the discoverer, whose vague attempt to ascertain the worth of his treasure-trove resembled that of the child who digs up a plant to see whether it is growing. Vast sums are expended by the Nizam in the purchase of precious stones, and the native Regalia surpasses all the Crown Jewels of Europe in splendour. The risk of loss or theft precludes the public exhibition of this Royal treasury, and only a favoured few are permitted to behold the priceless collection.

The hoarding of gold and jewels is a noteworthy trait of the Indian races. In every caste and class savings from all sources are invested in this portable property, and buried beneath the flooring of houses or hidden in disused wells and deserted tombs. Jewels are considered the most staple form of wealth, and fortunes are never counted without reckoning the stock of gems, for which the market is never closed or depressed. The jewel-casket forms the chief factor in matrimonial alliances, and the lowliest bride possesses her "stridhan," or dowry of jewels, generally equivalent to five years' income on the part of the bridegroom. No tribute is levied on jewels, and even if valued at a lac of rupees—forty thousand pounds—no income tax is paid. A recent computation estimates the value of the treasure hoarded throughout British India at two hundred and fifty millions sterling. This tendency of the native population virtually prohibits the introduction of gold as current coinage, for the precious metal would invariably be added to the accumulated treasure, and immediately put out of circulation.

When the slender cypress shadows lengthen across the green enclosure of the central tomb, we drive to the fortress-crowned hill above a gloomy tarn, where native women are washing their garments and drying them on the pebbly beach. A turbaned soldier admits us at the fortified barbican, and we follow him through a vaulted gallery bristling with guns, to crumbling flights of moss-grown steps which alternately climb the cliff and descend into crypt-like corridors hewn in the solid rock, their oozing walls loopholed for arrows and defended by cannon on rocky ledges which command the plain. The granite bastions, strengthened with massive masonry where

the formation of the rock necessitates artificial defence, overlook the wide wastes of the Deccan from the hoary domes of the Royal tombs to the yellow minarets of Hyderabad. On the crest of the hill a stone chair surmounts a double flight of granite steps, and from this airy height the Nizam, on his birthday, surveys his territory and receives the homage of his soldiers after the feast which celebrates the occasion. As the sentries on guard appear somewhat perturbed by even a temporary English occupation of their monarch's al fresco throne, we descend to the ramparts. A soft breeze rustles in the clinging ivy, and a radiant sunset throws an orange glow over the ashen grey of the rocky wilderness, transmuting even the clouds of dust into a golden haze by Nature's mystic alchemy. A herd of black buffaloes, driven by a turbaned boy, drink thirstily from the shallow lake; a white cow stumbles down the steps of the fort after a meal on the waving grasses in crevice and cranny; and girls in red sáris go forth with brass lotahs on their heads to draw water. Carriages of native and foreign magnates roll across the shadowy plain in the cool twilight; the dark face and soldierly form of Afsur Jung are conspicuous in a Royal equipage drawn by prancing Arabs. An imperious-looking boy of ten who sits a superb white charger to perfection is pointed out as the son of the Prime Minister, and a barouche filled with veiled Mohammedan ladies shows a glimpse of dark eyes and lovely faces through misty folds of diaphanous muslin. The violet dusk throbs with a thousand scintillating stars before we reach our destination, and the curtain of night descends for a brief spell of peace and silence upon the tumultuous life and conflicting interests which weave a many-coloured web of visionary enchantment round the historic city of the Nizam.

AT THE END OF THE WORLD.

A COMPLETE STORY.

When Polly Dutton realised that her father was dead, that the game was over and that she was on the losing side, she set herself seriously to think what she should do. They had all hoped that, after his death, there would be peace in the family; there had never been any before. Often when dissensions had been hotter than usual, some one of them had said, "It would be better if he were dead," and even Polly had not said no. Yet she was his favourite child. Her brothers had grown up and run away from home as soon as they were big enough, and her sister had gone on a visit to Brighton and sent back word that she was married; they were on their mother's side. But Polly was her father's ally. She called him by his first name and gave him advice about his affairs, and assumed rights before strangers that she would have been doubtful about his granting in private. And he never gainsaid her. She was virtually mistress of the house. Her brothers and her sister were gone, her mother was engrossed in ministering to her own bodily and spiritual well-being in prolonged conferences with her physician and her ghostly adviser; so it was Polly who kept the accounts, and directed the household and entertained at her pleasure. And when a girl of twenty-one has been mistress of an establishment since the time when first her frocks were lengthened, she is inclined to think with the Irish peasant that fixity of tenure is the only possible arrangement which can give lasting satisfaction.

The Duttons soon found that peace did not follow their father's death. There had always been a hostile party, and there was one still. Its head had fallen and, therefore, enjoyed immunity from further recrimination; but Polly, who had sided with her father and defended him with her sharp tongue, remained still a vexatious factor. She had had too much power. She had had the whip-hand much too long for the youngest member of the family. This power they proceeded to take away by discreet advice poured into their mother's ear. She found herself shut out from the family councils, ignored where she had once been considered, a superfluous dependent where she had once ruled. That she felt aggrieved was undoubtedly the result of her father's favour, which had put her in the place vacated by her mother when she coaxed herself into invalidism, but it was none the less difficult to bear. Polly was a young woman of spirit, and after she had worn herself ill with grief for her loss in her own passionate, wilful way and had lived through an attack of fever, she resolved to make a change.

"Either America or South Africa," she said to her mother. "And it doesn't make the least difference to me which."

"My dear child," cried Mrs. Dutton, "how can you think of such a thing?"

"I have always understood the climate of Canada to be unusually healthful," said her brother John.

He was one of the executors.

"Very well, then, Canada let it be. Give me my portion and let me go."

"I don't quite see, myself, what you're going to do with your portion after you get it," said John. "You'll have barely enough to live on. Here you have a home in addition to your income. It's well to consider these things now, to avoid future misunderstandings."

"And your clothes, Polly," said Mrs. Dutton mournfully. "How will you get your clothes? When what you have now are all worn out, what will you do to get more?"

"Do?" Polly gave a short, scornful laugh. "I'll be housekeeper for a widower, or found a young ladies' school, or keep books in an office, or act as special correspondent to 'The Times.' People do everything out there."

"Oh no, my dear, I really do not think it would do. People would think it looked so strange to see you going off there alone."

But Polly saw that her mother was looking on the plan with favour, and there was a sting in her heart on account of it. She would have liked better to meet with opposition, and carry her plan in the face of it.

In spite of all, it was with a light heart that she made ready to sail across what Mrs. Dutton referred to as "the wintry sea." She understood that English girls were valued in Canada. She had even heard of prosperous young gentlemen farmers or ranchers going West who sat on convenient posts of vantage and watched the ocean liners as they came in, in order to secure suitable helpmeets in the wilderness. These, she felt, would be quite out of the question. Neither did she intend to permit any proposal of marriage in a railway carriage, as she understood was the custom of the country; but in the event of an American millionaire presenting himself—say a lumber king or a railroad magnate—she had made up her mind to give his case careful consideration. Mrs. Cowles, the old lady with whom her people had arranged she should go out, said such cases were quite common in the Colonies, and though Mrs. Cowles had never visited the Colonies, and had no more reliable authority than her own imagination for her assertion, Polly believed her with enthusiasm. Her brother John, when they parted at Liverpool, begged her to remember that they had a cousin in America whose name was Harry Dutton, and that he was ranching somewhere near Medicine Hat.

"He will be just the person to show you the sights over there," said John, in the evident belief that the New World might be seen in a week at least, provided one pursued one's purpose industriously.

So one of Polly's first acts on arriving in Montreal, where she found the people speaking only rather bad French and worse English, and no Blackfeet or Cree at all, was to write to Harry Dutton of her arrival. The third week after brought a letter from him, written in a slashing hand, saying he had not seen the face of a relative for five years; that he was a bit circumscribed as far as house-room went; but that, if she and Mrs. Cowles were coming West, and could put up with bachelor hospitality, he would think it one of the greatest pleasures in life to drive them over the prairie. He urged especially that they should let him know just when they were coming.

"He wants to have things looking their best when we get there," Polly said, laughing and running her fingers through her short blonde curls. "These bachelors are always proud of their housekeeping, though they pretend to be so humble. I wonder what he looks like now? Five years. I must have been sixteen when he left England."

She examined herself critically in a mirror, and wondered if her cousin Harry was a difficult man to please. She had felt a little downcast of late because some one at the Windsor Hotel had mistaken her for a Connecticut Yankee.

Mrs. Cowles was absorbed in a C. P. R. guide.

"Yes, we can go without change of cars from here to Winnipeg," she was saying. "And we'll certainly be safe there, because we can appeal to the Hudson's Bay Company."

Polly jumped to her feet.

"I say, Mrs. Cowles, let us start out clandestinely, and on the spur of the moment, and surprise Mr. Harry in the slough of his bachelorhood. What do you say? Suppose we go at once, and catch him on the fly, as that baseball young man said the other day."

So it came about that on a day in the early fall, Miss Polly and her elderly friend found themselves speeding along the C. P. R.

line west of Winnipeg, filled with the delicious fluttering trepidation born of not quite knowing where they were going, or who would take them in after they got there. At least, Polly was in this state. Mrs. Cowles, having found law and order prevailing in the city of Winnipeg, and no occasion having arisen on which it was necessary to seek the protection of the Hudson's Bay Company, had resolutely declined to flutter over subsequent events. She was reposing now in a chair at the rear of the car, where she could close her eyes and meditate without afterwards feeling the necessity of explaining to her travelling companion that she had not been asleep. Polly was in her own chair, midway between the two doors, done up very tight and trim in her dark blue serge and mannish collar and tie. Her straw hat was in the rack overhead, and she had a blue cloth cap crushed down over her curls. Those curls, the result of her fever, caused her some discomfort. She was afraid they looked too irresponsible. Otherwise she was an Englishwoman from the tips of her dogskin gloves to the broad heels and thick soles of such boots as never were made in the Western hemisphere. Besides, Americans do not hold themselves so erectly as Englishwomen do.

There were only two other travellers in their car. One of these was standing outside on the platform looking out over the level, flying country with an air of good-humoured familiarity, as if he and it were on very good terms indeed. Polly concluded that he was a native of the country and a tiller of the soil, though why she thought so she could not have told. He was dressed in a suit of dark tweeds, with no other evidence of his nationality and pursuits than might be extracted from a wide-brimmed hat and a sunburned complexion; and even these are not always infallible guides.

The other passenger was a little dapper man, with light curly hair, and blue eyes, and a diamond in his necktie. He had changed his seat so that he faced Polly, and as her eye fell on him in its circuit about the car, he got up and deferentially offered her a newspaper.

"Care to look at the Toronto 'Globe,' miss?" he said. "Latest European news."

There was something in the little man's manner that displeased Polly, and she accepted the sheet with as frigid a bow as she could command. For a moment she was undecided whether to offer him a nickel for his trouble or not, but concluded she had better not. The flying panorama of the prairie soon claimed her whole attention. The long brown grass was spotted with yellow, brown-hearted flowers, except where occasionally a settler had broken the sod and left lengths of black furrows behind him. She put her head out of the car window, and watched the two lines of the track running away into the western sun. Now and again they halted at some mournful-looking new village, where the moaning of the air-brakes, she was fanciful enough to think, was like the loneliness of the few white faces that waited for them and watched them go. Now and again the tepees of an Indian camp showed their dirty white patches against the sky-line.

"Handsome country, ain't it?" said a voice at her elbow.

She turned with a start to find that the little man had established himself beside her, blocking out all way of escape, and prepared to beguile the time with conversation.

"Travellin' alone, miss?" he said, with an insinuating smile. "I s'pose, now, you're goin' out to teach school the other side the Rockies. Lots of young ladies on that lay goin' out this time o' year. I'm up and down this line considerable myself. Hardware goods — actin' for Smith and Hendry, Toronto." He took out a card and laid it on the seat beside her. "We might have the pleasure of knowin' each other's names, I think," he said.

Polly was dumb with indignation. She turned her head to speak to Mrs. Cowles; but that lady's resonant breathing was audible above the rattle of the train, and she knew it would be useless. The little man was edging himself closer to her.

"I guess you're finding it pretty hot in this here car," he went on. "Let me fan you."

She struggled to her feet, all the blood in her body tingling in her face.

"How dare you! Go away. Go away at once!" was all she could think of to say.

"Oh, say now," he answered, giving his hat a jovial tilt backwards, "you don't mean it, I know. No need to play that little game with me, my dear."

For one awful moment she thought she would fight her way to freedom if it were over his dead body. She looked in desperation at the bell-cord. She could reach it only by passing him. Then she heard the door open, and saw to her great relief the

big sunburned fellow she had noticed hours before on the platform.

"Oh, take him away, take him away!" she cried hysterically.

The big man walked up to them, looked at the little squirming fellow an instant, then bent over, and winding his huge arm around the pigmy's waist, carried him kicking out of the car.

The noise which this occasioned roused Mrs. Cowles, and she opened her eyes and asked Polly in a tragic voice if they had been telescoped. She was astounded, and indignant, and grateful when she heard what had happened.

"Let me see that hero, Polly, and commend him personally for his bravery," she said.

But the hero did not return, and when they had stopped at another station and the conductor passed through, Mrs. Cowles learned by discreet enquiry that "the small gen'leman which had been in that car was getting off there, and the large gen'leman was in the smoker now."

Then Mrs. Cowles sent a note on a leaf torn from Polly's commonplace book, begging "the large gen'leman" to come and let her thank him in person, and after the train had begun to rock once more on its onward way he came.

He was a good-looking young fellow, with a crop of chestnut hair and a bright smile; and he was modest, too.

"Why, it wasn't the least trouble, I assure you," he said, in answer to Mrs. Cowles's fervent thanks. "The fellow wasn't a bit heavy, and we left him making faces and brushing the dust off his trousers at the last station."

"But your opportune arrival!" sighed Mrs. Cowles, looking at him earnestly through her pince-nez. "I shall never forget your opportune arrival, when my friend was in danger and I was—ah—meditating by myself. You see, we had received such courtesy all the way out to Winnipeg, and nothing happened to us, and people were so polite, that I was quite unprepared for anything of the kind. And now I'm sure I don't know what to do. I have almost a mind to stop at the next station to make enquiries. Miss Dutton's cousin lives somewhere in the vicinity of Medicine Hat, but I suppose it's a large vicinity. And he doesn't know in the least that we're coming. It would be too terrible to arrive there and find no house of entertainment for travellers, and perhaps be at the mercy of the natives."

"Well, that would be too bad," he said with a smile. "But is it possible that Miss Dutton is aboard this train, going to visit her cousin at Medicine Hat?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Cowles.

"Miss Polly Dutton, England?"

"Yes," cried Polly.

"Well, this is turning out like a play, isn't it?"

Mrs. Cowles looked at him in perplexity. "Then I suppose you're Polly's cousin," she said.

The young man rose excitedly, and made two reverent little bows. "Mrs. Cowles, Miss Dutton," he said, "we've been looking forward to your coming as the mariner looks for the sunrise after a stormy night. No, I'm not Harry Dutton. He's an older and a better-looking man. I'm only Frank Reeves, his partner, and the one who has to do all the cooking for the establishment."

"This is indeed opportune," said Mrs. Cowles.

"I should think it was," Frank Reeves replied. "I've been to Winnipeg to order some machinery, and Harry is to meet me to-night at Medicine Hat with a democrat-waggon. He'll be paralysed with delight. Only"—and he looked ruefully at the two ladies—"we won't be fixed up for company. Harry hasn't the first instinct of a housekeeper, and he pulls things about awfully when I'm away."

Polly was relieved to find on their arrival that, though her cousin Harry was delighted beyond measure to see them, he escaped paralysis. He was waiting with a team of spirited little bronchos before a two-seated spring-waggon. Frank Reeves stowed Mrs. Cowles away in the back seat because it had a cushioned back and was more comfortable, and then helped Miss Polly into the front.

"I'll drive back, old fellow. Turn about's fair play, you know," he said, and then sprang in beside her.

The bottom of the waggon was packed full of supplies—groceries, and binder-twine, and a section of a mowing-machine knife that bounded and rattled against the springs. The road they took was the old Hudson Bay trail, that wound back and forth like a brown ribbon over the prairie. Once they passed an Indian riding on a stubby pony so short that the brave's feet might almost have touched the ground. Once they met a whole Indian family on the move, the lord of the tepee in advance with a pipe in his mouth and serenity on his brow, while the other members

staggered on behind with the personal property distributed among them according to size and strength. By-and-by the red harvest moon rose slowly above the waves of prairie grass, and followed them as they went. Polly was absorbed in watching the strong brown hands that held the reins. The prairie wind, sweet with the scent of the grasses, blew against her face. She thought she had never known what it was to be free before.

"But it isn't always like this," Frank Reeves said. "When the rainy weather comes, a man carries his homestead around on his boots. And you don't live here away from your own kind for half-a-dozen years without being pretty badly off for a sight of one of the old faces. You're bound to praise the bridge that carries you safe over, you know, but I'm often tempted to cut it all, and go to Victoria or Montreal and live a civilised life once more." He flicked the bronchos' ears. "Provided, of course, I could persuade somebody to share my lot with me. Are you going to stay over long, Miss Dutton?"

"No," said Polly decidedly. "I did think of staying here for ever, but I've made up my mind that I can't live in a country that hasn't adopted free trade as one of the principles of its national policy."

"Yes, it is a pity," he said mournfully. "But then"—brightening—"we're going to have a change of Government soon. Would you think of it then?"

But Polly was too much interested just then in a red fox that showed himself on the road in front of them, and then sneaked off into the tall grass, to reply. And soon after they reached what Harry called "the shack."

"There seem to be only two rooms, my dear," whispered Mrs. Cowles when they had been left to take off their hats, while the two men were making frantic preparations for supper. "They're out of doors doing the cooking now."

But Harry came in and reassured them. "We've gone in for a summer-kitchen," he said. "Folks around thought us quite extravagant. Can't use it in winter 'cause it's too cold, and the snow drifts in the cracks. We've got the cooking-stove out there. Reeves is cooking on it now."

He pulled out a table from the wall and began to put more leaves on it.

"Sorry we haven't got a better table-cloth, but most of the fellows round haven't any at all. We only use ours in case of company."

He began to put some cups and saucers on the table in a desultory way.

"Do you know," said Polly to Mrs. Cowles, when he had gone into the summer-kitchen to find out what part of the supper was burning, "I am going to lay that table myself."

She peeped into the cupboard and found pipes and tobacco on one shelf, and butter and cheese on another.

"What does this mean?" she said, pointing sternly to the combination when Harry reappeared.

"Don't usually put our pipes away after we've used 'em, that's a fact," he said, and then, quite unabashed, went on to explain the antiseptic properties of the weed.

She went into the summer-kitchen and found her champion, with a very red face, bending over a pot of hot lard that stood on the stove. He had a long fork in his hand, and was turning over some irregular, golden brown balls, that were sizzling in the fat. A "Home Cook Book" was lying open on the table.

"They're flitters," he said. "Four eggs, three cups of milk, two teaspoonfuls of Elevator baking-powder, a pinch of salt, and enough flour to make a stiff batter. To be eaten hot with maple syrup."

"Oh!" said Polly.

"Yes," he replied, growing enthusiastic as he went on, "and perhaps you wouldn't object to keeping an eye on them while I scramble some eggs in this frying-pan."

Reeves used to say afterwards, when he was a married man and had gone back to the Old Country, that if the little god with wings and a quiver wanted to regain his lost estate, the thing for him to do was to go to the wilderness and make regular assaults on the kitchens. Companionship in labour makes us wondrous kind. Reeves scrambled the eggs, and Polly kept her eye on the flitters. She burned her hand with the hot lard, and he, in the absence of anything better, bound it up with a clean tea-towel. They were old friends by the time that Mrs. Cowles and Harry, tired with waiting, came out to know why supper wasn't forthcoming, and found the tea boiling merrily on the stove, and the flitters stone-cold on the table.

After supper Reeves sang a song. He was indebted to Mr. Kipling for the words, he said, but the music and the artistic interpretation, they would please be kind

enough to remember, were his own—all rights reserved.

The wild hawk to the wind-blown sky,
The deer to the wholesome wold,
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
As it was in days of old.

The heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
Light of my tents be fleet!
Morning lies at the end of the world,
And the world is all at our feet.

Then they wandered out into the subdued light which on the prairie stands for night, and while Harry showed Mrs. Cowles the extent of his wheat-fields, Polly and Frank Reeves again discussed the protective tariff of British North America.

Polly always swears that she did not say yes that night. However that may be, it occurred some three months later at Winnipeg, with the Reverend Fothergill Thorne officiating, and "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden" audible above the admiration of the onlookers. And Polly's people at home said it was a blessing, and Frank Reeves concurred.

ULSTER SINGING SCHOOLS.

Until very recent days Church music was almost completely neglected among the Presbyterians of Ireland, especially in Ulster. Nor was this much to be wondered at, considering the disturbed state of that "most disthressful country." When the "planters" were never safe except under the walls of their castles and "bawns"; when the dispossessed Kelts hung about in bands among the mountains, ever ready for a raid; and when the reaper carried his sword to the field as well as his scythe, the times were not propitious for the cultivation of the arts of peace. But after the Union, when people could sleep quietly in their beds without the fear of being dragged out and "carded," they began to think more of the amenities of life; and, among other things, music received a good deal of attention.

Still the Ulster Presbyterians were tenacious of their Scottish characteristics. Like their progenitors and kinsmen in "the Land o' Cakes," they would not "pray by Act o' Parlymint," neither would they suffer "a kist o' whustles"—alias, an organ—to be used in public worship. Church praise was—and in most cases is yet—conducted by a precentor, whose qualifications are not always of the highest order.

In country congregations the performances, if not most musical, were certainly most melancholy. A strange minister, preaching in a church not far from Coleraine, gave out a long measure psalm. The precentor, with great vigour, started it to "David's," a common measure tune, and was greatly perplexed to find he had a couple of surplus syllables at the end of the second line. Looking up at the minister, he exclaimed in a reproachful tone:

"It won't sing, sir!"

Whereupon the pastor, looking down at him, said solemnly: "You must make it sing, sir!"

Fortunately a member of the congregation came to the rescue, and the service proceeded without further interruption.

The present writer has heard a good deal of curious singing in the Presbyterian churches of Donegal and Tyrone. In one, not far from the historic shores of Lough Swilly, the precentor, a worthy man who was trying to impart more animation to the psalmody, used to come in at the end of a verse fully a beat ahead of the choir. The choir, in its turn, was half a bar ahead of the general congregation. Two or three old-fashioned folk, with high quavering voices, brought up the rear after everybody else had finished. Upon a stranger, accustomed only to English church services, the effect was electrical, to borrow a suggestive newspaper phrase.

During the first quarter of the present century, "Singing Schools" were started in rural districts for the purpose of improving the musical taste and attainments of country congregations. These "Singing Schools" soon became highly popular, and none need wonder thereat; for, like the weekly paper of to-day, they presented a delightful combination of instruction and amusement. The Presbyterians during their sojourn in the Green Isle had lost some of their Scottish staidness, while they had unconsciously gained a little vivacity by contact with their sprightly neighbours. Accordingly, they were nothing loth to join in an enterprise that, under the name of religious instruction, offered excellent opportunities for fun and "divarshion."

The "School" usually met in a farmer's parlour or barn, where dancing could be carried on after the singing was over. But about 1832 the ministers awoke to the incongruity between dancing and psalm-singing, and denounced the saltatory performances with great vigour. Not that there was anything disreputable about the meetings. On the contrary, they were very respectable, and conducted with strict

propriety. Those who attended were the sons and daughters of farmers and village shopkeepers, with the schoolmaster, and a sprinkling of the better class artisans. The girls were generally escorted by their brothers, and frequently a father accompanied his daughters to the meeting, especially on moonlight nights when footing was more secure.

Dancing is such a favourite pastime that it was not given up without a long struggle, though eventually the ministers prevailed. However, the young people were determined not to be altogether defrauded of their amusement; so they introduced games of a more or less boisterous character, in which "wads"—or forfeits—kissing, hugging, and courting were prominent and pleasing features. Whether the ministers were satisfied with such a Pyrrhic victory this deponent saith not.

But undoubtedly the subject of widest and most permanent interest at these "Schools" was the composing and giving out of "the lines." All who were able tried to compose original verses to be sung to the psalm tunes that were being practised. Many of these "lines" were coarse and in execrable taste. Most were, of course, personal or local in their application. But a fair proportion of them were really vigorous and witty; the country people still remember verses of sixty or seventy years ago, which struck the chord of popularity at the time, and survived the decay of many a nobler effusion.

Most of the following specimens have been dictated by an old gentleman who was a regular attender at the "Singing Schools" for several winters. He lived in the part of Donegal, near Lough Swilly, called "the Laggan," which is peopled chiefly by the descendants of James the First's Scottish planters. The land is comparatively fertile, and the inhabitants are among the most thriving and prosperous to be found amid the picturesque valleys of that great county which extends from Malin Head to Slieve League.

At one meeting it was broadly hinted that a poetical youth had been prompted by the schoolmaster, who stood immediately behind him. In a few minutes the young fellow gave out these lines, which were considered a capital retort:

> No monarch of the grey goose quill,
> No captain of the switch,
> E'er did my struggling muse inspire—
> I claim no aid from such!

From an agricultural gentleman's "lines" we catch a glimpse of the Arcadian simplicity of rural life in those days:

> Gortree it is a purty place,
> And purty girls therein;
> They wash their dishes in the burn,
> And dry them in the sun.

As might be expected, Scriptural subjects were frequently chosen. To that fine old tune, "St. David's," a farmer appropriately gave out:

> When David was a little boy,
> Herdin' his father's sheep,
> There came a wolf and stole a lamb
> While he was fast asleep.

David, indeed, was a great favourite, but Paul and Job had also many admirers. One budding laureate, being hard pressed for a rhyme, overcame the difficulty by a magnificent effort, thus:

> There was a man lived in the East,
> His name was J—o—b;
> And he was perfect and upright,
> And loved his G—o—d.

Another bucolic gentleman, thirsting for curious Biblical information, propounded this query:

> The question that I put to you,
> Come, answer me in full—
> The calf that Aaron for them made,
> Was it a quey or bull?

An answer to this question was speedily given; but the stanza, though one of the wittiest, is unprintable in this polite age.

A notoriously idle fellow was offered some very good practical advice to the tune of "Newtown." Perhaps the same hints are not entirely inapplicable to "the finest pisanthry in the worl'" even at the present day:

> Dirty, clatty, footy Watty,
> Whase pigs are hokin' here?
> You labour ill on Birney Hill,
> Which maks yer land sae dear.

Irishmen have always been singularly susceptible to feminine influence; and even Scoto-Irishmen are touched with the same amiable weakness. Perhaps there is something seductive in the air. At all events, our impromptu versifiers frequently sang the virtues and attractions of their fair neighbours; so it was not surprising when one amatory youth announced:

> There is a wee lass in this hoose,
> She's nixt me a' but three;
> An' if the maister gi'es me leave
> I'll tak' her on my knee!

The simple directness of the following quatrain is worthy of Bloomfield; and it is to be always remembered that these gems were produced on the spur of the moment, not manufactured the week before as some of the best impromptus of dining-out wits

are said to be, and as Sheridan's certainly were:

As I cam' tae the Schule this nicht,
A purty sicht I saw—
A wee bit lassie an' her lad
Were coortin' in the snaw.

Sometimes, however, the allusions to the ladies were the reverse of flattering. Even Irishmen are not exempt from the common weakness of girding at elderly spinsters. An emigrant to the United States, who had returned empty-handed, announced to the tune of "Dublin":

I was at Amerikay an' back again;
I've sailed the River Foyle;
I'm like an ould maid that's coorted out,
I've nothing for my toil!

The first two lines of the above effort are an excellent illustration of the anti-climax. Indeed, most of the "Singing School" poets shared that natural taste for bathos which Matthew Arnold attributes to the English people.

A rustic philosopher of an inquiring mind and a reflective disposition, thirsted for abstruse information. He sang:

The razon why this tune's called York
I niver yit could know;
They might as well have called it Cork,
St. Johnston, or Raphoe.

Local peculiarities were often hit off very happily. A farmer on being pressed to give out lines for "Savoy"—now called "Old Hundredth"—at length produced these:

I wasn't born where poets grow;
I don't know much—but this I know:
Wherever the Divil spends the day,
He spends the night in Killygoray.

The fact that Killygoray had an evil reputation as the haunt of young mischief-makers and rough characters lent its point to the farmer's clever impromptu.

After all, however, the most vigorous and pointed of the "Singing School" verses were purely personal, and therefore have now lost much of their interest except to a few of the oldest inhabitants. A couple of examples will suffice. Jamie Neely, nicknamed "the Cock of Tully" from his combative proclivities, was known to be, like Marlborough and many another valiant warrior, afraid of nothing earthly save his wife's tongue. Judge of his feelings, then, when these lines were given out:

O, Jamie, cock, you're here, I see,
Clipped out and spurred to conquer me;
In Ruskey Glen you got your hen—
I doubt she pecks you now and then!

At another meeting a person named Mackinlay contrived without much effort to make himself exceedingly disagreeable. Besides his ill temper, he was chiefly remarkable for the enormous length of his proboscis; and his astonishment may be imagined when he heard the following quatrain given out:

When Satan entered into swine
Their race for to destroy,
He left one long-nosed boar behind—
Mackinlay, you're the boy!

This stanza sung to the solemn strains of "French," the author at the same time pointing to Mr. Mackinlay, produced an effect altogether indescribable, and it was with difficulty that a bout at fisticuffs was avoided.

Prior to 1832 the following tunes only were used in the Ulster country churches: French, York, London, Dublin, Dundee, Elgin, David's, Mary's, Newtown, Martyrs, Abbey, and Savoy or Old Hundredth. These are still called "the twelve old tunes" by elderly country folk. Burns mentions three of them in the "Cotter's Saturday Night":

Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the sacred flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays;
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame.

When it was proposed to supplement "the twelve old tunes" by several others of more or less fame, the forces of conservatism rose up against all innovation. After a long struggle, however, it was eventually decided that the Devil should not be allowed to have the best of the music for himself and his disciples. Upon this wise decision being arrived at, a new music book was published containing a considerable number of fresh tunes, which gave more variety to the service of praise; and the "Singing Schools," with their dancing, and their games, and their "lines," gradually died out, leaving good store of pleasant memories to those who had known them in their palmiest days.

Since then a considerable advance has been made in musical culture, especially in the larger towns, such as Belfast and Londonderry. Some years ago the great Organ Question threatened to rend in twain the Irish Presbyterian Church. Generally speaking, the townspeople were in favour of using instruments; the countryfolk clung to the old ways. Ultimately a compromise was effected, by which each congregation is practically left to settle the matter for itself.

At present the psalmody of the urban churches is, as a rule, good; but in some of the rural congregations the singing is still fearful and wonderful. If there is a choir,

it may contain—in addition to a body of sopranos — two or three bass singers, a contralto or "second," and a couple of tenors; but the "musicianers" are almost invariably drowned by the congregation, who—man, woman, and child—sing the air at the top of their voices. Each man sticks to his own tune and time with the characteristic self-reliance of that sturdy race who turned the woods and swamps of Ulster into fields of corn and flax; but the results of their independent singing are not so gratifying to the ear as the yellow corn and blue-blossomed flax are to the eye.

A young country minister who, unfortunately for his comfort, happened to have an exquisite taste for music, called upon an elderly member of his congregation to ask her to moderate her peculiarly shrill voice, which she used most lustily.

"Ah, but, meenister," exclaimed the dame—who was "weel acquent wi' Scripture"—"Dawvid, ye ken, tells us to sing wi' a loud noise."

"So he does," answered the pastor; "but then he adds 'skilfully.' David liked harmony, and I don't mind the loud noise so much if it is harmonious."

But the lady, like many another excellent wife, loved exceedingly the sound of her own voice, and still continued to make a "loud noise," to the annoyance of the choir and the agony of the pastor.

"D'ye see that hoose?" remarked a worthy old precentor to the writer, as they walked along a delightful country road, not far from the pleasant little town on the Roe where the immortal Peg of Limavaddy first dawned on Thackeray in all her native grace.

The house to which the precentor pointed was a decent, two-storey, slated dwelling, with a neat garden in front.

"Well," he continued, "I biggit that hoose wi' the win' o' ma mooth!"

This was his quaint way of saying that he had saved his salary as precentor—five pounds a year, no less!—and built his house with the savings. Though the "win' o' his mooth" might not be very musical, he had done his work faithfully. For thirty years he had "raised the psalm" in the sober-looking old meeting-house, and never missed a Sabbath.

After all, however, the very old-fashioned precentor and the very old-fashioned style of singing can now be found only in congregations "far in the wilds remote from public view." It is only just to say that in the spread of refinement which has marked the latter half of the nineteenth century, Ulster has participated; and even in the rural Presbyterian Churches there is a growing desire to make congregational singing a more artistic and enjoyable vehicle of praise.

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART I.

"Oh! aunt, what is the use of bothering when it is only for three weeks?"

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip. If I were a superstitious person, Alice, I should simply shudder at the confident way in which you count upon the future. How do you know what may happen between to-day and the twenty-second? Nothing is more easily put off than a wedding, especially under such circumstances."

"Aunt Robina," said the girl, laughing, but looking a little vexed, "if I had the slightest spark of superstition in me, I should simply tear my hair and go mad at your prophecies of evil. What should stop our wedding? We are both extremely well. There are no epidemics about. Except yourself—forgive me saying such a thing, but it is as civil as anything you keep saying to me—we neither of us have a relation near enough to stop matters by inconveniently dying, and you are in perfectly good health, sound in wind and limb."

"Alice, you certainly will not die of a broken heart. You have none to break," said Aunt Robina resentfully. "I only think it my duty to remind you that to count with such certainty even upon to-morrow is a tempting of Providence."

"To say that," said Alice gravely, "means really that Providence keeps constantly on the look-out to do us a bad turn, and is frequently tempted to do it just to spite us for being happy and trustful. I don't believe in that religion."

"The less we say about religion the better," said her aunt grimly.

Alice bit her lip, but held her peace. It was, of course, wrong of Arthur Knollys to paint at home on Sunday mornings instead of going to church, but marriage would change all that. A wife's influence should, of course, be much stronger than a girl's. And she certainly had a very great deal of influence over him. He had been an out-and-out pagan of the very latest school till he fell in love with

her last spring, when she went up to town to stay with her father's cousin, Mrs. Kinnaird. He had followed her down to this remote Northumberland village, far away from the rush and stir he loved; and he had declared many hundred times that he never knew how beautiful Nature was until she showed him those wild moors and wilder coast, or the real joy of living, or truth, or goodness, until he knew and loved her, and knew that he had won her love. Was it not a very triumph of woman's power that she should have taught him all this; that he who had travelled over half the world, who had lived among Alps and deserts, who had sailed on the Ægean Sea, and had explored the terrors of Krakatoa, should find his ideal of earthly loveliness realised in those wild sweeps of level moorland, that rugged, lonely shore? Was it not still more wonderful that he, a much-talked-of though not as yet much-paid young painter, petted and lionised by smart women and beautiful girls, should have lived for three whole months at a primitive and roughly provisioned inn in an out-of-the-world but not at all out-of-the-commonplace village, without being bored for one minute? And was it not the most wonderful thing of all that Alice à Court, a comely, fresh-looking girl, not at all clever, and educated by an old-fashioned governess, should have won the admiration of a man whose whole thirty years of life had been given to the enjoyment of beauty, and who was used to girls who could chatter in four or five languages, play the violin, and write in weekly papers? What wonders, then, were not left for her influence to work?

She was a girl with a strong will, or she could never have carried her engagement through in the teeth of her aunt's opposition. There was perhaps not much reality in that opposition, for Miss Downing was greatly if secretly proud of her niece's early success. Though the conquest had been made under the wing of Mrs. Kinnaird, a lady whom Miss Downing heartily disliked, chiefly for being on the à Court side of the family, was it not really to be attributed to the excellent way in which Alice had been equipped for the fray? Mrs. Kinnaird's daughter, Elinor, was four years older than Alice, and not yet engaged, though she had had the advantage of six London seasons and much home and foreign travel. Mrs. Kinnaird might pretend to despise Aunt Robina and her rustic surroundings, but she could no longer set Elinor up for a model of beauty and training, and sneer in that offensive way of hers at Alice's rusticity; since Alice had carried off the prize, which was not exactly Arthur Knollys in the concrete, of whom Miss Downing did not think very much, but the prize of matrimony in the abstract, of which Miss Downing, like all old maids, thought very highly indeed.

The annoying part of it was that it should be Arthur Knollys, a poor painter, who was the condition of this prize-winning, and not Dick Freeland, who was so rich and so thoroughly respectable. Dick Freeland was a small squire, resident at Terrivale Hall, close to Turlemouth. It was not a very splendid place, hardly more than a large farmhouse; but it was his own, and had belonged to his forefathers for four generations, which gave Dick a very exalted standing in the neighbourhood. He could not have managed to live upon the rents of the farms attached, but his mother had made a large fortune, and he was considered to be a very good match indeed. It was said that Violet Sandys, who was quite of the county, would have married him had he not so openly preferred Alice à Court. But as Miss Downing's friends told her frequently before Alice's engagement, Dick was such a flirt; he had been talked of so often. He knew his own value too well, and had no idea of settling down for many years to come.

After Alice became engaged to Arthur Knollys, they ate their words, and condoled with Miss Downing when they were expected to congratulate. Such a risk to marry a young man she picked up in London, whom no one knew anything about; and Mrs. Kinnaird was flighty, and knew so many strange people. And painting was such a very precarious means of making an income. Alice must have done it out of pique to punish Mr. Freeland, who certainly would have been a much more respectable match if he were to be had.

It was a rich September morning, all changeful brilliant lights and shifting shadows, wealth of colour, and fresh, wholesome earth-smells. Alice was clipping off withered leaves in the pots round the sitting-room window, bright and wholesome as the morning, in spite of her old faded gown, lamentably in want of renovating touches. Alice had to make her gowns last a very long time, and now, when every penny available had gone to her trousseau, she was obliged to hugger-mugger in holes and corners, as she called it, in any old rag to save her one

tidy morning dress for walking in with Arthur in the light of day. Miss Downing was very much annoyed that Mrs. Waterton, the Rector's wife, should just have called and caught Alice in her old brown holland, whose tight sleeves and limp washed-outness gave her such a wretched appearance of draggled poverty. As if an old cotton in autumn did not always look deplorable, while tight sleeves in these much-sleeved days represent the last shrinkage of destitution!

"You might make yourself fit to be seen," grumbled Miss Downing, "and remember there are some people in the world with eyes besides Arthur. It would serve you right if he were to catch you in that untidy dress. A nice slatternly wife he would think he had got."

"No fear," laughed Alice. "He is shut up with Bonnie Kilmeny, safe for all the morning. She has to be finished and off his mind before he can go comfortably to church on the twenty-second."

"For my part," said Aunt Robina emphatically, "I should not think it quite proper that a man I expected to marry in three weeks' time should shut himself up a whole morning with a flighty girl like Rose Dobson."

"No more should I," said Alice quickly, "and he doesn't. Rose sat to him always in the open air when I was with him. She was of very little use to him really; only for the figure, and hair, and dress. I sat to him for the face, hands, and feet. It would be too absurd if I were to be jealous of my husband's models. They are no more to him than lay figures; like patients to a doctor, who are only 'cases.'"

She spoke with the colourless firmness of one who recites a lesson; but a lesson she thoroughly accepted for fact.

"What a very distinguished-looking girl that was with Mrs. Waterton!" said Miss Downing, apparently changing the subject. "How elegant her dress was! She made you look so shockingly shabby and insignificant. It was well Arthur did not see you together, since he considers your figure such a weak point."

Alice ought to have laughed at her aunt's ill temper, but constant dropping will wear away a stone, and these perennial droppings of malicious insinuations had long ago worn away Alice's patience, and much of her large commonsense. She began irritably:

"You understand nothing about painting and Bonnie Kilmeny's figure, and I don't think Arthur would have admired Miss Boyd. She is so very plain and hopelessly uninteresting. Arthur likes expression."

"But it's just expression he can't get," said a masculine voice, and its possessor appeared round the corner of the verandah—a tall, fair young man, to whom Alice turned with joyful relief, regardless of the old holland frock he was never to have seen.

"Have you finished Kilmeny already?" she asked, walking across the lawn with him.

"No, and I never shall," said the artist despondently. "If there had been a fire in the room I would have cut her into strips and burnt her."

"Arthur! and she is so beautiful!"

"But she is not Kilmeny. She is a milkmaid, who never saw anything less substantial than a cow. I have painted her eyes out and in all the morning, and I cannot get a glimmer of meaning into them. It makes one despair."

"I am so sorry," said the original owner of the meaningless eyes. "I tried all I could, you know, to look as if I had seen fairies. I suppose it is difficult to look the right way if you have the wrong sort of ideas what fairies are like. My idea will remain as it was originally formed by pantomimes. I can't help thinking of fairies as pretty girls in gorgeous ballet dresses, not at all awe-inspiring."

"You read the poem, you knew that Kilmeny had not come from a pantomime," said Arthur impatiently. He was an artist, which means that his nerves were all outside, and that the ideal after which he sought was worth for the moment infinitely more than any reality, however dear and sweet, who might be standing near. Alice had often been told of this characteristic of the artist nature, and heard it with reverent interest, but she was not an imaginative person herself. She had no ideals that she knew of. And she was shocked and pained that Arthur should for any reason speak impatiently to her and accuse her of incapacity for grasping at his lofty meaning.

"Shall I try again?" she asked. "Look here—I will fetch the Kilmeny book and you shall read it to me here under the firs. The smell of them and the dying fern makes one think of glens and fairies. It will impress me much more having you to read it to me than reading it alone."

She darted off to fetch the book, regardless of his expostulatory murmur, "I shall have to read it to you while you are sitting, to catch the expression the moment it comes and put it on the canvas;" regardless of everything but the need of saving

time, lest the picture should not be finished so as to let the painter be married on the twenty-second.

She ran over the lawn and darted into the drawing-room by the open French window. Hogg's poems were in the bookcase there. She was pulled up short upon the threshold, seeing a strange lady standing between her and the bookcase, a tall, finely-built woman dressed in blue serge, with a plain, pallid face, light-grey eyes, and a dull, rather sullen countenance.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Boyd," said Alice, recognising the stranger with too manifest annoyance.

"Mrs. Waterton left her sunshade. I came to fetch it," said Miss Boyd abruptly.

Her manner was certainly repelling, and yet Mrs. Waterton had said she was such a delightful person, and so very clever and so fascinating.

Alice looked round to find the sunshade, and to her surprise beheld Arthur standing in the window, staring at Miss Boyd. She did not know he had followed her. She glanced at Miss Boyd to perform the necessary introduction, and behold, the stupidly sullen countenance had lighted up and she was looking at Arthur with eager interest.

"She is one of those ugly women who keep all their talents and energies for trying to attract men," Alice thought contemptuously. Then all at once she remembered her shabby old dress, and thought how poorly she must show beside the well-appointed Miss Boyd. "Though Arthur cares nothing for dress," she told herself, "except as drapery, and cannot possibly admire her. I am not beautiful, but I shouldn't like to be quite so plain as that."

Yet Arthur seemed to have forgotten all about Kilmeny, and was quite deeply interested in Miss Boyd. Aunt Robina was fortunately engaged in the kitchen region, or she might have made herself quite extra disagreeable had she beheld. She would have at once seen proof of her assertion that Alice, in her old gown, would be nowhere beside Miss Boyd in her new one, even in the eyes of Alice's own artistic lover.

"And I thought artists disliked new-fashioned clothes," Alice mused ruefully, in spite of her vaunted confidence. "They should like rags and faded silks and discoloured woollens."

The conversation was commonplace to a degree. Mr. Knollys asked Miss Boyd if she liked Pyncholk? If she intended to pay a long visit? If she had been in town last season? What did she think of the galleries? and so on, and so on.

Miss Boyd had been in town last season, but she had been a good deal engaged, and had not had much time to bestow on art and amusement. She did not seem to know much about pictures. Indeed, she knew very little about London. She had lived chiefly in India. Her father had been a college friend of Mr. Waterton's, and hence this invitation to the Rectory. Alice wondered how she had been occupied. She looked too well-off to have been working for her living, unless she were a flourishing novelist, and she looked too stupid for that. Alice had met journalists and very minor novelists at Mrs. Kinnaird's, and they none of them looked so prosperous as Miss Boyd. She was not in mourning, but she might have been nursing a sick relative who had recovered.

It was very satisfactory that Arthur should look disappointed at her want of interest in art. Alice had never been jealous in her life before, and would never have thought of being so now, within three weeks of her marriage, with a three months' tested lover. It was only because of her shabby dress that she was depressed, and Aunt Robina had been very nasty, and Arthur had been cross for the first time.

"It is as if some evil spirit had come amongst us and disturbed the peace," she thought uneasily, watching Arthur's assiduity in recommending himself to Miss Boyd's good graces.

He actually persisted in talking pictures to her, though she not only had disclaimed any knowledge of art, but had not pretended to any interest in his profession. He told her about Bonnie Kilmeny, and his difficulties with that young woman of uncanny experiences. Alice was angry. It seemed as if Arthur were complaining to a stranger of her own shortcomings.

"I should think time will hang rather heavy on your hands here, Miss Boyd," said Arthur.

"I shall not be here long," she answered ungraciously. "I suppose it is a rest. One needs rest."

"Ah, yes, indeed; and I was just going to ask a great favour of you."

Alice started, and wondered if Arthur were not going rather too far by way of expressing his dissatisfaction with her eyes and her old dress.

He added thoughtfully:

"Yet it would not trouble you very much. It would only be for a few minutes,

perhaps, and might even amuse you—break the monotony of the place."

She looked at him with quickened interest.

"What do you want me to do for you?" she asked.

Alice was indignant. What could this stranger possibly do for Arthur? And she looked as if she were expecting some very large order indeed. Her eyes, pale of colour as they were, darkened and gleamed with eager anticipation, and his met them as eagerly. They two were for the moment held together by a common mental bond, and Alice was shut out like the merest stranger.

"I wonder if you would be so kind as to sit to me for half an hour?" said Arthur, his eyes alight.

Sit to him! That ugly, uninteresting woman! And he had declared Kilmeny must be finished before he could be married, and it would take up a tremendous amount of time to do it. And here he contemplated a new picture, which also, no doubt, would have to take precedence of his marriage, and would swallow up all the time already grudged to love-making.

But Miss Boyd did not look in the least flattered. She was vividly disappointed. What could she have expected Arthur to want of her?

"I cannot do that," she said shortly, rising to leave.

"Oh, pray don't say so!" Arthur besought her, as if he would fain fall on his knees to implore. "My whole future is in your hands—I mean, of course, my artistic future," he added hurriedly, for even his absurd preoccupation was disturbed by Alice's angry eyes and Miss Boyd's puzzled stare. "I am finishing a picture, and I am stuck fast for want of a model—you have the very face I have been dreaming of——"

Miss Boyd hesitated between accepting such flattering unction to lay to her soul, and wondering whether the artist might not be a little crazy; but she was a woman, and naturally found it easy to believe a compliment. She did not see her face as Alice saw it, featureless, spiritless; and readily supposed herself to have underrated her charms in having believed her figure her strongest point and rather given herself up as a beauty. It was no doubt immensely flattering to be asked to sit to a painter. She knew nothing of art, and did not understand that models are sometimes prized for unique ugliness; nor did the astounded Alice remember that fact. She only remembered that Miss Boyd and not she possessed the face Arthur had been dreaming of.

"I shall be very glad if I can be of any use," said Miss Boyd, trying to conceal a gratified smirk under a veil of polite patronage.

"Thanks, thanks!" cried Arthur rapturously. "When may I ask you—can you now?"

"Oh, not quite just now," she demurred. "Wouldn't this afternoon do? And how do you wish to take me, in fancy dress or as I am?"

"Any dress, that does not matter. I only want your eyes—and daylight, please."

Miss Boyd started slightly, something after the manner of Prince Arthur before Hubert. Alice looked more astonished than ever. "They are like boiled gooseberries," she thought.

"Come at three, then. It won't take long."

Then Miss Boyd shook hands absently with Alice and departed, Arthur of necessity escorting her to the garden gate.

NOTICE.

On the 12th of SEPTEMBER will be published, price 6d., the

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 298.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

"TELL him to come up at once—at once, Adelaide! I don't understand it at all! See that he comes directly, if you please!"

The words were uttered by Dr. Vallotson from his bed; uttered with the utmost fussiness and self-importance, and with all the irritability of an invalid whose placidity has been disturbed at too early an hour. It was eight o'clock in the morning. Three minutes earlier the sound of a dog-cart stopping at the garden gate had elicited an interested and cogitatory exclamation from Dr. Vallotson, who was not sufficiently recovered to leave his bed before the afternoon; almost before that ejaculation had passed his lips his wife had stepped brusquely to the window, and raised the blind. No word had come from her, however, until a tentative enquiry was uttered by her husband. Then she had announced briefly that the arrival was North Branston. The news, coupled with the fact that North Branston had not returned from Hatherleigh Grange by twelve o'clock on the previous night, immediately led Dr. Vallotson to the conclusion that his substitute had passed the night with his patient; and the idea had thrown him into a state of testy excitement, the outcome of which was the above peremptory summons to his partner.

Mrs. Vallotson was still standing by the window. She had dropped the blind, but she was standing with her eyes fixed as though she could still see out. She did not move even when Dr. Vallotson finished speaking; a second or two passed, and he was beginning to fidget restlessly, when she turned and walked across the room. Eight o'clock was the breakfast hour in the Vallotson household, and she was ready to go downstairs. Though Dr. Vallotson could not see it, her lips moved as if she answered him; but no sound came. He took her departure for assent, and she left the room in silence. She went downstairs almost mechanically, and at the foot of the stairs she stopped abruptly. For a moment she stood there, one hand gripping the balusters, and then she went on into the dining-room. Constance was there, alone.

"Good morning, mother," the girl began. Then, as she came close to her mother, she stopped involuntarily. "I'm afraid you've had a bad night!" she asked.

Mrs. Vallotson kissed the soft round cheek presented to her hurriedly, barely touching it with her lips.

"No," she said, "nothing of the kind, child." Her voice was hoarse and rough, and she paused a moment as though its tones struck harshly even on her own ears. "Go and tell North that your father wants him at once," she said. "Tell him to go straight up."

And as Constance obeyed, her mother sat down, heavily and as if perforce, in the chair by which she stood at the head of the table.

Constance's inference as to her mother's night was by no means unnatural. Mrs. Vallotson's hard red colouring was blurred and patchy, her lips were white and cracked. Her eyes were hollow; they were surrounded by reddened circles and shaded by heavy eyelids such as only total want of sleep produces; and their keenness was dull and strained. She sat in

her place, staring straight before her without a movement of any kind, until the door opened to admit Constance. Then she stirred suddenly, and began to make the tea.

"North has been out all night, hasn't he?" said Constance, rather resentfully, as she seated herself. "He looks very tired, certainly, but he need not be so exceedingly taciturn, I do think, mother!"

There was no answer; and Constance, glancing at her mother, decided that some annoyance or other connected with North lay at the bottom of her demeanour. She came to this conclusion without surprise and with some unconscious satisfaction. It seemed so entirely the right thing that a person who remained so oblivious of her superior qualities as did North, should be in the wrong in every direction. She digested her dignified reflections for a few moments in silence, and then she began to make conversation. Constance always made conversation; she considered silence a sign of intellectual poverty.

But on this occasion she found it almost impossible to get her conversation under way. As a rule, in her duologues with her mother she found herself encouraged—if not assisted—by a series of comments and responses which, even if she considered them not always worthy of her remarks, were a token of interest which she involuntarily respected. This morning such comments were altogether lacking. Breakfast went on, and still the mother and daughter were alone together. North did not appear, and by-and-by, in spite of Constance's efforts, silences began to occur; silences which made her feel strangely uncomfortable. It was in the midst of one of these silences that Mrs. Vallotson started suddenly to her feet.

"It is quite time your father had his breakfast," she said. "Give me his tray, Constance!"

Before she had finished speaking she had moved round the table, and with her one available hand was rapidly collecting the necessary items.

"Toast, Constance!" she said impatiently. "That's right! Now open the door for me! Be quick, child!"

"But won't you let me take it, mother? Or let me ring for Mary, as usual. You can't manage——"

A peremptory gesture from Mrs. Vallotson silenced the girl. Constance opened the door, and Mrs. Vallotson went out of the room.

Mrs. Vallotson went upstairs, but she opened a door which led, not into the bedroom, but into the dressing-room adjoining it.

"I won't tolerate it, I tell you! It's a piece of confounded impertinence, such as only—only—a jackanapes could perpetrate! Once and for all, I will not tolerate it!"

The words, evidently the conclusion of a lengthy tirade, came to Mrs. Vallotson's ears through the opening that led into the bedroom, even as she closed the door softly behind her; the voice was Dr. Vallotson's, but it was so high and tremulous with incontrollable passion as to be hardly recognisable. Mrs. Vallotson stood motionless, drawn back against the wall, so that her figure was invisible from the room beyond—into which she for her part could not see—holding her tray mechanically; the patches of colour in her face standing out against their livid background, her eyes strained and eager.

A moment's pause followed Dr. Vallotson's words; then North Branston's voice reached the dressing-room. It was hard with immoveable self-control.

"The point at issue is not one that can be paltered with," he said. "The man's life is at stake. Treated on your original diagnosis the actual disease would run its course unhindered, and we should lose the case in twelve hours. I have told you what I have detected, and the treatment I intend to adopt."

Mrs. Vallotson's clutch upon the tray tightened; her bloodless lips moved slightly as though she tried to moisten them. But for those signs of life she might have been a marble statue of Attention rather than a woman.

"What you have detected!" broke out Dr. Vallotson's voice, almost choked with wrath. "What you chose to assert, sir—that's what it is! Anything to set yourself up above your elders! Anything to feed your own confounded arrogance and conceit! Anything——"

"Anything to procure myself the pleasure of an interview like this! If the case were not an exceedingly interesting one, I should have greatly preferred to let it go!"

There was a dangerous note of rising contempt in the young man's voice, and it seemed to touch Dr. Vallotson's wrath—founded, as it seemed, on wounded self-importance—into yet greater extremes.

"Interesting!" he ejaculated. "Interesting! Do you imagine for one moment, sir, that if things were as you assert them to be, you could pull the man through? Does

your conceit induce you to believe that you will succeed where better men than you fail ninety-nine times out of a hundred? I ask you, do you believe it?"

"I propose to try!"

The retort came sharp and short, ringing with defiance, strength, and resolution. Mrs. Vallotson moved suddenly. A wholly indescribable flash of expression leaped up in her eyes; she crossed the dressing-room with swift steps, and entered the bedroom.

Dr. Vallotson was lying — or rather almost sitting up—in bed, his face pink with passion, and his hands trembling. Facing him, but standing at some little distance, was North Branston. Not even the intense purpose of its set could soften the bitter lines which stood out about his mouth. He had been up all night with Sir William Karslake, and his eyes were haggard.

As Mrs. Vallotson entered, both men turned involuntarily towards her. A brief, conventional greeting came mechanically from North Branston, but she did not even glance in his direction. She passed him, and went up to her husband, who had received her with an inarticulate ejaculation which seemed to demand recognition for, and participation in, his indignation.

"It is time you had your breakfast, Robert," she said. "The things can't be kept hot all the morning."

She placed the tray by his side as she spoke, and he waved it away with a gesture as grandiloquent as his recumbent position would allow.

"I cannot take any breakfast, Adelaide," he said, with choking dignity. "I have been too seriously annoyed—I may say insulted. It may be long before I can recover myself."

"I am the offender, of course, Adelaide," said North Branston. The previous scene had evidently shaken his self-control, for his sardonic tones were rather reckless. "I have had the misfortune to differ materially from Dr. Vallotson on a professional matter, and to be obliged to tell him so—a less common occurrence! Don't keep any lunch for me; I shall have a busy day."

Mrs. Vallotson had not looked at him as he spoke; had never paused, indeed, in the arrangements she was making on Dr. Vallotson's breakfast tray. But, as he finished, she turned and faced him. She looked at him for an instant with an accentuation of an expression which had lurked in her eyes more than once, as they rested on him, during the last few days;—as though she saw him from a vast distance which dwarfed into insignificance the ordinary antagonism of their relations.

"Sir William Karslake is very ill?" she said.

"Yes," answered North curtly. And he turned on his heel and left the room.

To all those members of his household who came in contact with Dr. Vallotson, and whose temper or spirits were capable of being affected by his mental condition, the day that followed was a day of trial. As far as could be judged, it seemed more than likely that his prophetic utterance would be justified, and that it would be long indeed before he recovered himself. Dr. Vallotson had received hard treatment at the hands of fate. To have to relinquish to North Branston a patient of such social standing as Sir William Karslake, was in itself a trial. But the result ensuing on that relinquishment was hardly to be borne. North Branston had told him briefly that his diagnosis of the case was mistaken; and that the man in whom he had detected no organic disease was lying at the point of death. The younger man had further given him a concise sketch of the treatment he proposed to adopt, without consultation with himself, and in direct opposition to his methods; and had proved impervious alike to denunciation and invective. Dr. Vallotson's self-love smarted and writhed in every nerve; impotent indignation stretched him on the rack.

Alone with his wife, his sufferings expressed themselves in an incessant recapitulation of the circumstances of the case, involving an unending vituperation of North. With other members of his household who could not be thus confided in, he relieved himself by such an exhibition of irritability and pompous self-assertion as made his very neighbourhood a terror to the servants, and sent his daughter out of his room twice in the course of the morning with wrinkled forehead, elevated chin, and temper which did slight credit to her philosophy.

But Constance, as the morning passed into afternoon, became vaguely conscious that the gloom which hung about the house; the gloom which was producing in her a state of irritable depression such as she had hardly ever known before; emanated, not from her father's condition, but from her mother. Mrs. Vallotson had gone about her household

duties as usual; she had ordered, supervised, and attended to Dr. Vallotson's comfort, precisely after her usual fashion. But it seemed to Constance that she had not uttered one unnecessary word. There was a concentration about her, an intense absorption, from which the girl held herself instinctively aloof.

The afternoon was not half over, and Constance's spirits and temper had reached a point much nearer to a state of collapse than she would have believed possible. It was wet and cold, and a constitutional being out of the question, Mrs. Vallotson had supplied her with some needlework; Mrs. Vallotson herself was reading aloud a book of travels in a mechanical, monotonous voice; and her husband, thus denied the relief of speech, was fidgeting irritably, when the front-door bell rang. Mrs. Vallotson read on unheeding, until a moment or two later the door was opened by a servant. The trio were sitting in Dr. Vallotson's study.

"Mr. Armitage is in the drawing-room, if you please, ma'am!"

"Mr. Armitage," echoed Dr. Vallotson testily. "Bryan Armitage! What the deuce does he want? These boys have too many holidays. Suppose you send him word you are engaged with me, my dear? Or let Constance go and amuse him! Yes, yes, that will be the best way! Let Constance go!"

Constance was already folding up her work.

"He won't stay long, mother," she said, with matter-of-fact composure. "I'll tell him you're busy."

Mrs. Vallotson signed assent, her eyes returning to her book, and Constance went out of the room.

Her head was held distinctly higher than usual as she went along the passage to the drawing-room, and her nose was aggressively tilted. She had by no means forgotten the circumstance under which she had last parted from Bryan Armitage. But for three days Constance had spoken to no one outside her own home circle, and the vivacity in her eyes seemed to suggest that with true philosophic tolerance she was prepared to find even an encounter with an offender better than no communion with her kind at all.

Bryan Armitage rose precipitately as she opened the door, and came eagerly towards her.

"How are you, Connie?" he said. "I hope I'm not an awful nuisance for calling, but I—I wanted to know how Dr. Vallotson is?"

Constance shook hands with lofty dignity.

"He is better, thank you," she said. "My own impression is that if he would only try to control his temper he would be a great deal better."

This revelation of feeling—for such it was, in spite of the majestic deliberation with which it was uttered—seemed to encourage Bryan. He followed her example and sat down, saying cheerily:

"Oh, well, you know he's got the gout, and we all know what that means. I expect to have it some day myself; it's in the family."

He paused, and glanced at her with an enquiring flash in his blue eyes. Constance was sitting contemplating the fire with an air of the deepest and most intelligent interest; her small person was very erect, and her very consciousness of her visitor's presence seemed to be an act of distant politeness. The severity of her demeanour seemed to invite or even to demand apology, and in so doing to suggest a possible placability behind. Bryan Armitage had arrived at a fortunate moment.

"Dr. Vallotson's illness has kept you at home a great deal," he began; "you and Mrs. Vallotson. I've looked out for you everywhere, Connie."

"Yes?" she said. She spoke with the absent civility of one whose soul is filled with higher matters.

"I've wanted to see you, you know, awfully. That's really what I've come for to-day, Con. I say, I'll apologise anyhow you like! It's really beastly of me to have offended you; I'm no end cut up about it!"

Constance turned her head and regarded him as though he were a very small boy, and she the personification of the dignity and wisdom of age.

"You've not offended me!" she said. "You evidently don't understand my mind, Bryan! It is a sign of inferiority to be what you call 'offended.' But I must say that it has pained me much to see how exceedingly narrow you have allowed your intelligence to become, and how hopelessly out of date are your ideas."

Bryan crossed his legs and settled himself comfortably in his chair, resting his head so that his shrewd, twinkling eyes could watch her face.

"That's a bad look-out!" he said cheerfully. "My ideas about spheres, for

instance, I suppose you mean? I'm not chaffing," he added hastily, as Constance's chin lifted itself ominously, and a flush appeared upon her cheeks. "Upon my word I'm not, Connie. I really do want to get at what you mean."

She paused a moment, looking at him dubiously. Then apparently convinced by the sincerity of his eyes, into which a shade of genuine anxiety had crept, she said authoritatively:

"It's extremely simple! If you had kept in the least abreast of the times, you would know without being told. However, I will do my best to explain myself." She paused, a little contemplative frown wrinkling her forehead. She was evidently considering how the subject in hand could best be brought within the limits of his comprehension. "I suppose, Bryan," she began, "that even you are not so densely ignorant as not to know that to-day belongs to woman?"

The last word, as she pronounced it, was spelt with a capital letter of only slightly more colossal proportions than those of the first letter of the previous substantive. She paused for a reply, but only an inarticulate murmur came from Bryan Armitage. His face was an odd mixture of gravity and apprehension, just touched with an irrepressible sense of humour. Constance, whose question had been a mere matter of form admitting of no denial, continued. "Of course it follows," she said, "that with woman, as a matter of fact, rests the solution of all the problems of the day. Now, I dare say you may have heard—in fact, you must have done so, whether you know it or not, because it's in the air—that the great problem of the day is the social problem. Oh dear, no, Bryan, not socialism"—this in a tone of impatient disdain, in answer to a murmur from her listener. "Socialism is only part of the labour question. It's a mere phase. No, the social problem—the relations between the sexes, and all that they involve."

The words had come from her lips as calmly and as glibly as though they were a phrase of ordinary everyday life, and she looked at him as she spoke with the dogmatic, supercilious self-assurance of the clever schoolgirl who lays down the law as to the present condition of the perfect man. They brought Bryan Armitage up from his reclining attitude with a scarlet visage of horror, and an ejaculation which, though again inarticulate, was by no means murmured.

Constance looked at him with eyes of pitying disdain.

"You are dreadfully out of date, Bryan!" she said. "My dear boy, the time has come when these things must be faced boldly by men and women side by side. The time has come when men and women must work together for a new era."

"But you don't intend to talk like this—you don't mean, Connie—Good Heavens, you don't propose to be the inauguration of a new era in Alnchester?"

"Yes, I do!" returned Constance calmly; she had met the horrified incredulity of his incoherent speech with a smile. "By a new era, I mean an era of intelligent comprehension. Don't distress yourself, Bryan. Of course I shall do nothing violently or in a hurry—nothing that would startle or annoy my mother, for instance. I have a very great respect for my mother, though of course she belongs to the old order. She is one of those women who were brought up to think it improper to know anything. I shall just prepare the ground and feel my way, and do what is possible by the force of personal influence and example until I have become a power!"

"Oh, good Lord!" groaned Bryan, rumpling his hair with an agonised gesture. "Oh, Connie!"

"I have a plan which I mean to put in motion," she continued, "as soon as ever I am a little better known and have grown popular. And I think you may perhaps be useful to me, Bryan. I intend to establish a club for both sexes—a club where they can meet in a rational way, and see the literature of the day—of course we shall have to select it at first—and talk things over. I intend——"

But Constance's further intentions were not destined to verbal developement at that particular moment. Her words were cut short by the opening of the door, and Bryan Armitage, with the bewildered dismay about him of a man who is only half awakened from a nightmare, stumbled to his feet as Mrs. Vallotson entered the room.

"How do you do?" he said. "I'm very sorry—I mean I'm delighted to hear that Dr. Vallotson is better. What delightful weather!"

The afternoon was closing in torrents of rain, but Mrs. Vallotson did not seem to notice anything confused about the young man's speech.

"He is much better, thank you," she

said. "Constance, ring the bell. He is coming in here to have tea."

"I'm no end sorry I can't stay!" said Bryan, with unabated confusion. "I really must go. Good-bye!"

Mrs. Vallotson made no effort to detain him.

He shook hands with Constance in a great hurry, and disappeared.

Whether the little interlude had quickened her sense of contrast, or whether the gloom that fell upon the house with his departure was really heavier than that which had preceded it, Constance did not ask herself. She only realised, as she poured out tea for her querulous father and her taciturn mother, that there was something in the atmosphere, metaphorically speaking, which was hardly to be endured. She had plenty of time to analyse that something—though analysis failed utterly to reduce it to its elements. Afternoon passed into evening, and still she and her parents were alone together. North did not come in.

Dinner-time arrived, and still he did not return.

The dinner was passed by Dr. Vallotson—who rejoined his family in the dining-room for the first time—in one long and vituperative colloquy with himself as to how and where the young man could possibly be occupied; a colloquy the ever-recurring burden of which was a surmise to the effect that North was engaged in "making a fool of himself" at Hatherleigh Grange, and that Sir William Karslake was fulfilling his—Dr. Vallotson's—prediction by dying incontinently in his doctor's hands. From the beginning of the meal to the end Mrs. Vallotson sat in absolute silence.

It was not until the trio had been re-established in the drawing-room for nearly half an hour, that the opening of the front-door was heard.

On a peremptory word from her father, Constance rose and went to the drawing-room door.

"North," she called, "father wants you."

She came back to her chair, and a moment later North Branston stood in the doorway.

Dr. Vallotson wheeled round his chair with a movement which provoked from him a groan of pain.

"Where the deuce have you been, sir?" he demanded angrily. "You've not been in since nine o'clock this morning!"

"So I am very well aware," said North drily. "I have just come from Hatherleigh."

"And how's your patient, may I ask, sir? Dead?"

"No," was the brief answer. "He is still alive!"

MILITARY AND OTHER MEDALS.

As a record of contemporary events, the striking of medals has gone rather out of fashion. Time was when every public celebration brought a crop of medals. Was it a great exhibition, a coronation, a victory, a popular struggle, a big fire or calamitous shipwreck, the medallist would find his account in it, and good citizens would purchase his productions, and take them home to their families. Had there been in those days an affair of a great statesman retiring from public life, his effigy would have circulated in medals throughout the land. The illustrated papers now answer the same purpose, and fugitive photographs have taken the place of the enduring medal. The change is not altogether to the advantage of posterity, anyhow, for there is nothing more perishable than paper and print, while

The medal, faithful to its charge of fame,
Through climes and ages bears each form and name.

The medal seems to have taken its origin under the Roman Empire. The Greeks may now and then have struck commemorative coins; but the medal proper, as a piece of no fixed value, and designed to perpetuate the memory of some person or event, begins with the Emperors of Rome, whose features are thus preserved in a tolerably complete series down to the very fall of Constantinople. The art of engraving medals, which had fallen very low in the Byzantine period, came to a brilliant revival in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was also taken up and continued by a succession of French artists—the schools of Francis the First, Henry the Fourth, Louis the Fourteenth, and Napoleon being especially remarkable.

The great Louis was also a virtuoso in ancient coins and medals, and that he was well served by those who collected for him is evident from the following anecdote.

Vaillant, the King's antiquary, had made a voyage to Italy at the request of Colbert to collect medals and antiquities for the King's cabinet. He had obtained some valuable pieces, but on his return was captured by corsairs from Algiers, who carried off the vessel and her crew, and sold them to the best advantage. The Dey, however, conscious of the power of the

great French King, eventually released his officer, and restored his medals. Vaillant took passage again in a trading ship for Marseilles, and all went well till one rough day a Salee rover swooped down on the unlucky trader, and ordered her to bring to. These rovers owned no authority but that of their own chiefs, and were at war with all the rest of mankind; and their prisoners were certain to be stripped of everything of value they possessed. The antiquary, despairing of other means of saving his treasures, swallowed the most precious part of his collection, twenty gold pieces, in all weighing between five and six ounces. And then, before the pirates could come on board, the wind rose to a violent gale, the ships were separated, and after barely escaping shipwreck, the savant was safely landed on his native soil. As it happened, all ended well, and the medals, after all their perils, were safely deposited in the Royal cabinet.

But without going so far afield or running such risks in the pursuit of medals, there is no lack of interest in the varieties of our English productions, and especially of those connected with military and naval exploits. The English series begins practically with the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the wealth and taste of the English monarch attracted artists of all kinds to our shores. A fine silver medal shows a bust of the King, a gallant, soldier-like figure such as Holbein might have drawn; and a later one shows him scowling and rugged, "fidei defensor" as the wolf defends the flock, and "caput supremum" of holy Church. And a gloomy, terrible caput it is in its flat, jewelled bonnet; but a fine medal, adorned with the rose and portcullis as Tudor emblems, the fleur-de-lis for France, and the harp for Ireland. The reverse is occupied by an inscription in Greek and Hebrew, so that the world in general might be acquainted with our new departure in ecclesiastical government.

The next noticeable medal is a not uncommon one of the reign of Elizabeth, and perhaps the first instance of such a piece awarded as a naval or military distinction. It bears on the reverse the well-known emblem of the "Ark in Flood," and seems to have been awarded to naval commanders, before and at the time of the Spanish Armada. But the fate of the Spanish fleet was the occasion of many commemorative medals with gratulatory or pious inscriptions such as "It came, it saw, it fled," "He blew with his wind and they were scattered." It was a custom also with servants of the Queen to carry her effigy in the form of a medal, worn either round the neck or sometimes in the hat. In the latter case it might be taken as a challenge to Spaniard or leaguer to "take it out of you" if he could.

A medal struck on the accession of James the First is interesting for the inscription, which styles him Imperator or Emperor of the whole isle of Britain, as well as King of France and Ireland. As might be expected, Gunpowder Plot is "not forgot" in the medallic record. But it was the Civil War between Charles the First and the Parliament that first brought the medal into notice as distinctly a military decoration. Charles himself, in 1643, ordered a medal to be struck, as a reward for those fighting for him who had ventured on "forlorn hopes." At the battle of Edgehill one Robert Walsh, having distinguished himself by rescuing the standard of the King's own regiment from the enemy, was knighted and rewarded with a gold medal, "to be worn on the breast." And as this perhaps is the last instance of a knighthood bestowed for personal bravery, so it is also the first of a medal worn in the manner now so familiar to our soldiers.

On the Parliamentary side, the crowning victory of Naseby was commemorated by a medal of silver gilt, with a ring for suspension, bearing the head of Fairfax, the General-in-Chief, the famous "black Tom" of the Civil Wars, whose profile is hardly inferior in ugliness to that of the "Re galantuomo" of modern times. This medal was probably designed only for superior officers. But after the "crowning mercy" of Dunbar the Parliament ordered a medal to be struck, and awarded to every man present at the fight. This is a fine piece, and should take the first rank in every collection of English war medals—for, as it was the first issued to soldiers generally, so it is the highest in artistic merit.

A fine medal, to be worn as a badge, is that commemorating the naval victory over the Dutch in 1653, ending in the death of the gallant Dutch admiral, Van Tromp, who but the year before had hoisted a broom at the masthead, as a sign that he would sweep the English from the seas. For this medal Parliament voted two thousand pounds, but it was awarded only to officers. But as in the course of one of the actions Blake's flagship, the "Triumph," took fire, and was deserted by a portion of her crew, those

who stuck to the ship, subdued the fire, and brought her out of action, were rewarded with a special medal—every man and boy—known as the "Triumph." The reverse shows a naval battle and the obverse a very happy and appropriate design, in which the badges of the three kingdoms are seen hanging upon an anchor, the cable of which is twined about the whole.

The Restoration brought in improved mechanical methods, which facilitated the production of medals as well as of coins. Previously the best pieces had been modelled in wax and cast, the impressions afterwards being touched up by the artist. Now it became possible to strike medals in high relief from steel dies, and the medallist, whose art had formerly been allied to sculpture, now ranks with the engraver. There are good naval medals of this period, in which the Duke of York figures as the conqueror of the Dutch, the reverse of which shows a fleet of fine wall-sided old warships, the anchor-flag of the Lord High Admiral flying at the peak of the nearest.

The next naval medal on our list commemorates the victory of La Hogue, 1692, a sea-fight which the exiled King James is said to have witnessed from the heights of the rugged cape on the Norman coast. The medal was struck by the order of his daughter, Queen Mary, who thus commemorated the destruction of her father's hopes. The military medal struck in honour of the victory of the Boyne, 1690, shows King William the Third on horseback, fording the river and leading on his troops. In Anna's wars, the victories of Marlborough are singularly barren of medals; and Pope's verses, "occasioned by Mr. Addison's dialogue on medals," seem to emphasize the deficiency:

> Oh, when shall Britain, conscious of her claim,
> Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame,
> In living medals see her wars enroll'd,
> And vanquished realms supply recording gold?

In the latter couplet the poet, with prophetic finger, points to the soldiers' war medals of the future, and is not responsible for the delay in their issue; but they certainly hung fire a long time.

A Dettingen medal, indeed, shows peppery but valiant little George in feathered hat showing his grenadiers the way—and records the last appearance of an English monarch on the field of battle. There are also some interesting Jacobite medals of the period, James the Third and Queen Clementina on one, the latter a charming head, of which the features are reproduced in her son, bonny Prince Charlie, whose effigy appears on a medal of 1745, with Britannia on the reverse, looking out for the ships that are bringing him to claim his own again.

The next is a war medal of 1758, recording Clive's victory at Plassy, with Victory seated on an elephant, and on the other side Clive bestowing a sceptre on a typical Hindoo — not taking it away, as might naturally be supposed. From this period Indian war medals are for a long time the only records of the victories of the British arms, and these distributed only to native regiments, the Royal troops which frequently bore the brunt of the battle being left without. Of these there is an interesting series, beginning with the Mysore and Mahratta Wars down to a Burmese War medal of 1826. The earlier of these do not acknowledge "Anno Domini" at all, but date from the Hegira, and the inscriptions are in Persian. They were worn by the good old Sepoys, attached to the neck by a yellow cord. Even the native West Indian troops got medals for the Carib Wars of 1773 and 1795. But the British red-coat got nothing at all.

Jack Tar was rather more thought of. Not, indeed, by the Government. Howe's victory of the first of June, 1794, brought gold medals to Admirals and Captains, worn by a "white and blue ribbon from the third to the fourth button-hole." But there was nothing at all for the sailors in general. And when Nelson and the Nile came along, it was not by Royal favour but by the good-will of one Mr. Davison, Lord Nelson's prize agent, that leave was obtained to issue medals to every officer and man engaged. The Trafalgar medal was presented by Boulton, of Soho.

It may be noted, however, that medals for individual acts of bravery had long been customarily bestowed in the navy. One, mentioned by Pepys as "the King for the Fyre ships," seems to have been reserved for those hardy seamen who ran fireships among a hostile fleet, and there is a warrant extant to Sir Isaac Newton, as Master of the Mint, directing the issue of medals and gold chains for the master and boatswain of the "Torbay" which caught fire when the Spanish treasure fleet was sunk in Vigo Bay, 1702. The last example is one to Captain Woolridge, for burning French warships in 1809—all, like the "Triumph" medal, connected with fire, and suggesting whether in our days some special dis-

tinction should not be reserved for firemen and stokers, who run the most fearful risks of any, both in peace and war.

And now, coming to the great European wars of the Revolutionary period, we might expect a great crop of medals for our brave soldiers. But no, there are gold medals for superior officers, but for the die-hards of the Peninsular War, who often, by sheer hard fighting, redeemed the blunders of their commanders, absolutely nothing. As for the Generals, Wellington complained that they were too thickly hung with medals. There is a splendid gold medal for Maida, the very finest of all our military medals, of which only seventeen were issued. Talavera was acknowledged in gold medals to commanding officers. And Wellington suggests that only one medal should be issued to an officer, and that future actions should be engraved upon it. When four actions had been scored, the medal should be replaced by a cross to be worn at the button-hole; decorations worn round the neck are "awkward to ride in," says the matter-of-fact commander. Frederick of York carried out the suggestion with a characteristic difference. The gold cross—Maltese, with lion statant in the centre, and suspended by a gold laurel wreath—was issued to be worn by General officers round the neck; others at the button-hole.

It is literally true that from Dunbar to Waterloo no "soldiers'" medal was issued. But the latter great battle did bring a medal to all concerned—a respectable piece designed by Pistrucci, with the head of the Prince Regent on one side, and on the other a winged figure of Victory seated. It was not till the present reign, when the century was half over and the old Peninsular heroes were getting scarce, that the survivors got their medal. This is but a poor affair in itself, a variety of the Victorian half-crown as to its obverse, and on the reverse a weak representation of the old Duke kneeling to receive a laurel crown from Her Majesty. Although generally known as the Peninsular medal, it is in reality a general service medal for actions fought during the great war. Each separate action is recorded on a bar or clasp affixed to the suspending ribbon of crimson with dark blue edge, and there are twenty-seven of these bars in all, some for actions as little known as Châteauguay in 1812, and Chrystler's Farm in 1813. Two medals were issued with as many as fifteen bars, but seven or eight is a good score, and if representing such actions or sieges as Busaco, Fuentes d'Onor, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria, Pyrenees, leave little to be desired in the way of honour.

The navy, also, had its medal, like the "Peninsular" one, only with Britannia on a sea-horse as reverse, and for this there were two hundred bars for as many gallant actions, the highest score not recorded. Soon after was issued the general Indian medal for twenty-one actions fought between 1799 and 1826.

Then there is a Kaffir medal for wars of 1834 to 1853, with design of the British lion taking a drink under a bush; and a China War medal of 1842, which is the first to bear the head of Victoria. The Crimean medal of 1854 is well known, the Balaclava clasp being most prized. The Indian Mutiny has its special medal, with five bars, that for Lucknow valued most. Some little wars in New Zealand in 1845–7, and again in 1860 and 1866, are represented by a special medal, while more recent wars in South Africa are signalised by the old Kaffir emblem. The medal for the Abyssinian War is of novel design, attributed to Princess Louise of Lorne; and an Ashantee medal of 1874 bears a design by E. J. Poynter, R.A. But the art of the painter and the medallist are very wide apart. The Afghan War of 1878–80 has its appropriate record, with a column on the march represented on the reverse; but Roberts's famous march has its own peculiar distinction—an effective star of five points, and the inscription, simple but sufficient: "Kabul—Kandahar."

The last Egyptian War of 1882 shows the familiar half-crown type, with the "Sphinx" on the reverse; and the subsequent campaigns in the Soudan and up the Nile are represented by bars over the same medal, nine in all. Riel's rebellion of 1885, in Canada, is represented by a medal with a bar for Saskatchewan.

Various Indian wars not otherwise specified are commemorated by bars over a general Indian Service medal, first issued in 1854, while the earlier Indian battles, 1799–1826, were first tardily recognised by a medal in 1851.

As well as the medal awarded to all concerned in a campaign, there are special medals even more prized, as they carry with them a claim for some gratification or annual allowance—that is, to the original possessors. There is the "Meritorious Service" medal, instituted in 1845; also a "Distinguished Conduct," for soldiers, from 1854; and a "Conspicuous Gallantry," for

the navy, instituted in 1855. The long service medal for both services dates from 1830 and 1831.

Most prized of all is the Victoria Cross, instituted on the twenty-ninth of June, 1856, a distinction open to all, from the drummer-boy to the General, and valued above any stars, crosses, or ribbons, of however exalted orders. A specimen is highly valued by collectors, for it rarely comes into the market, but forged examples are not uncommon.

To bring the list up to date, we must mention the badge granted to Volunteer officers of a certain length of service, and the as yet unissued decoration to be awarded to the rank and file. The Volunteers of the early part of the century were often presented with medals on disbandment, either by commanding officers or by grateful fellow-citizens; and there are also in existence many regimental medals, issued by commanding officers in recognition of merit or gallantry, dating before the issue of war medals had been officially established. So that altogether the field for the collector of war medals of all kinds is immense, and he is never likely to complain of having no more worlds to conquer.

MEMORIES OF A CHESHIRE MOOR.

Within a few miles of Cottonopolis the forward movement of civilisation has just destroyed what was perhaps one of the most interesting bits of Cheshire—Carrington Moss. Hundreds, nay, I may safely say thousands, of people living within a radius of a few miles hardly knew of its existence, and certainly did not consider it worth a visit. To us as schoolboys it was a paradise; and the dread of the keeper's stick, and an occasional drop into a bog-hole, perhaps only made us more anxious to visit it on every possible occasion.

Here, little more than half-a-dozen miles from Manchester, the red grouse flourished; a well-stocked grouse moor within a walk of that great city and half a million souls.

How free we always felt there! the soft oozy turf shaking under our feet as we raced after the heath-moths or meadow browns. Nature seemed so unconstrained; we could imagine we were back in the Middle Ages, before the Cotton Kings had begun their reign, and when our great cities were yet in their infancy.

A merciful accident had carried the railway through a cutting at the edge of the Moss, so that nothing could be seen but the smoke of passing trains, and the scarcity of houses in sight detracted from the idea of any considerable population.

Up sprang the grouse at our feet with a whirr that made us jump, and our guilty consciences revert to keepers. Away went her mate after her, dropping a hundred yards away in the heather, giving us his warning cry of "go back, go back, go back." But not if we knew it!

How many of those who knock the grouse over from behind the butts, or who smack their lips over him at three-and-six the brace, fully appreciate this sturdy fellow? How many know that he is our only exclusively British bird? There are no red grouse outside our tight little island. He is a true Briton; as his scientific name, Scoticus, denotes.

And the egg—in the cabinet—it is a beautiful and very conspicuous object, with its rich red-brown mottles and markings; and the casual observer points it out, and says: "That's a very pretty egg. What is it?" "A red grouse," you answer. "Oh! it looks red," he or she remarks, and passes on to another. But why is it red? Why those lovely markings? Had the mother grouse any idea of art? Did she think some one would come and take her egg to display her genius to posterity? If you had been with us as we turned to the spot from which she sprang up, you would soon understand the reason of those markings.

Beauty is not the object; it is protection, protective colouring. If you are not careful it is easy to tread on the nest without noticing these seemingly brilliant eggs among the heather and brown turf.

Swish! Away went the hare, dodging in and out of the clumps of heather, and throwing up a shower of spray behind her as she ran over the wet ground. Her form was close by in the top of a dry clump of heath, still warm where the pressure of her body had almost worn a mould of her crouching shape. A little bird fluttered in front of us with, apparently, a broken wing. Away it struggled, chirping plaintively, now tripping on its drooping wing, now turning a somersault in its terrified hurry. We stood and watched it; we had seen that performance before, and were not to be taken in. The little bird stopped, finding it "no go," and stood anxiously tweeting on a sprig of heather. It was all a farce to lure us from the nest, artfully concealed under the cotton-grass; and the meadow

pipit's eggs, as sombre in colour as the bird herself, harmonised wonderfully with the surroundings.

Far above us the skylark was singing: and, gazing upwards, we watched the little speck in the azure that was filling all the country round with its glad notes. Lower and lower it came—circling round, still singing, till suddenly a suicidal mania seemed to seize it, and half shutting its wings it dropped like a stone towards the earth; but Baldwin's parachute could not have checked its flight as easily as the suddenly outspread wings, only a few feet from the ground, and it alighted like a feather. In winter they become more sociable, and those that remain with us join together in flocks, and harry the fields in search of a livelihood. It is then that they are snared and shot to be eaten as dainties. It is amusing to notice the variety of small birds that are hung up in the poulterers' shops to be sold as larks; to wit, starlings, linnets, and, oftener still, sparrows.

A little yellow-billed bird used to inhabit the Moss, but I fear it has gone with the grouse, for the twite, or mountain linnet, can no longer find the downy cotton-grass to line its beautiful little nest. The twite, curlew, and red grouse were regular moorland birds, and Manchester refuse has driven them away to more congenial haunts; for alas, the Moss is now little more than a huge sewage farm for the city.

The curlew used to visit the moor; I well remember flushing one in the very middle of the breeding season; its plaintive whistle seeming out of place without the accompaniment of the surf or the low moan of the tide on the mud-flats. What a stately bird the curlew looks as she stalks about the moor, where it is wettest and most treacherous, her head erect and long curved bill stretching out in front! She reminds one of the pictures of the sacred ibis worshipped by the Egyptians. She is dreadfully shy, and no amount of caution will enable you to surprise her on the nest. Her mate on the slightest sign of danger flies off with a very decisive cry of alarm, and she runs for some distance before taking wing, thus hiding the exact locality of the nest, trusting to the mottled eggs or the protective down of the youngsters to keep them in safety.

There were a few stunted birch bushes on the Moss, and one of these was generally ornamented with two or three dead hawks or owls. Close by a pole about six feet high was stuck in the ground; and on the top an unbaited tooth trap, attached to the pole by a chain, kept its hungry jaws ready for all comers. This was a hawk trap. The poor kestrel or sparrow-hawk, weary of beating to and fro, would alight on this innocent-looking post for a rest, and when the keeper came his rounds, a blow on the head would extend that rest indefinitely. They were terribly cruel instruments, these tooth traps; the broken bones and lacerated limbs of the poor dead "vermin" showed what a grim fight they had made for liberty, hanging by their torn legs, released only from their agonies when the keeper chose to make his rounds. Many a poor innocent creature suffered on these living gibbets, kestrels, owls, cuckoos—and even thrushes and smaller birds sometimes. Would that man had more sense and mercy! Were God's creatures meant to be tortured and done to death that man might preserve one or two species for his own sport? The keeper would tell you it was well they were caught, for all were alike robbers of game or eggs. All were classed as vermin; what were they to him so long as his game turned out well on the opening day, and the tips came in all right?

To us the "vermin" of the Moss were perhaps of greatest interest. First and foremost was the carrion crow, a cruel, ruthless fellow that perhaps it is no sin to destroy. Yet I like this black brigand on account of his rarity, and there are one or two nests that the keepers will not be told of by me. He is a cunning fellow, and does not often get into a trap, and he knows the sight of a gun too well to get within shot. Of all the birds of prey perhaps he is the most voracious; young grouse, leverets, mice, carrion, and garbage of all kinds suits him. He will turn vegetarian if necessary. I believe he would eat brick-bats rather than starve. Sometimes he feeds with the rooks in the fallows; but he is easily distinguished from them, for his beak is shorter and stouter, and he retains the bristly feathers round the nostrils that fall off as the rook grows, and give it the appearance of possessing white wattles.

Perhaps the fierce little merlin was the next dangerous of the flesh-eating birds. He is a lover of the wilds, and sometimes used to visit Carrington. The sparrow-hawk can do some damage, too, amongst the game. She beats the hedgerows, flying low; striking her unsuspecting victim, perhaps, as it sits singing on a twig, darting down on it with an impetuous rush that often carries her far beyond her quarry.

There is some excuse for the keeper to slay her if she has a brood of clamouring juveniles in the neighbouring fir plantation.

But why destroy the kestrel?- That beautiful little red falcon, which glides so gracefully over the fields, now skimming onwards, now poising himself in the air, with swiftly vibrating wings and tail depressed, his keen eyes searching the ground below him for the unwary little field-mouse, then dropping like a stone, and rising again with the squeaking victim in his claws. He is the farmer's friend, and seldom if ever touches a young bird of any description. Mice are his staple article of diet, and it is wonderful the number he can get through in one day's foray. Yet the kestrel is most cruelly harried whenever he makes his appearance, because he is a hawk.

The cuckoo, as innocent of blood as a robin, because he has the misfortune to look like a hawk, often falls to the gun and trap. Still, the keeper may be excused his error, for even the small birds seem to think he is dangerous, and mob him most persistently. I have seen a single titlark chase a cuckoo out of sight, though perhaps it may have thought she had intentions of utilising her home, for the cuckoo is a lazy bird and puts her nursing out. She does not trouble to build a nest for herself, but deposits her egg in that of some small bird, and leaves it for her to hatch and bring up. And when the little cuckoo comes out of the egg, blind and apparently helpless, its instincts tell it that it can keep the parent birds occupied in supplying its needs alone, and straightway bracing itself against its fellow nestlings, it hitches them out of the nest. There it stays, always hungry, soon growing bigger than its foster parents, opening a cavernous mouth when they approach, almost wide enough to swallow them as well as the juicy caterpillar they are bringing. The cuckoo has, unfortunately for itself, the habit of settling on any post or bare tree and giving utterance to its familiar cry, and thus it often falls a victim to the pole trap.

The owls, too, settle on the post to rest in the evening, and are hung up next morning on the nearest tree. Poor owls, why should they suffer? The majority of keepers seem only too anxious to exterminate these best friends of the farmer. The barn and tawny owls feed almost exclusively on mice and small birds, and will even destroy beetles and other large insects. Yet the beautiful owls are entered in the black-book as vermin, and must be done to death on every possible occasion.

What an interesting bird the barn-owl is! Hiding all day in some barn or church rafters, and not turning out till it is getting dark, he is commoner among us than most people imagine. And when the noiseless shadow reels past us in the evening, most persons pass it by as an unconsidered trifle, or do not notice it at all. I say reels, for the owl has a peculiarly unsteady flight, rolling from side to side as if hopelessly inebriated. But careless as he appears, he is hard at work, straining those powerful eyes and ever-ready ears for the least sign of his prey; every now and then giving vent to a prolonged snore or shrill scream, possibly to frighten the feeding mice into movement so that he may detect their presence.

He is doing his share to keep in balance the great scheme of Nature. The flight itself is as soft and noiseless as possible; there is no swish of wings as when the lapwing passes over; no clatter of stiff feathers like the wood-pigeon's bustle; no whirr of rapid wings as when we flush the grouse or partridge. The texture of his feathers is so soft and fine that the beat upon the air makes no sound, and we are startled by the suddenness with which he comes into sight and disappears again.

He is a funny fellow, too. Unlike most birds he seems to have no real fear of man, but has a very cool way of either ignoring his presence altogether, or getting out of his way with very evident gestures of displeasure at being disturbed by such an inferior creature. His attitudes of alarm or defiance are very ludicrous: spreading out his wings, lowering his head and shaking it like a bull, puffing out the feathers of his back, smacking his mandibles together, and stamping with his feet. Probably all this exhibition is intended to frighten his adversary away, for, from my experience, I gather that the owl is not very fond of fighting when it comes to the actual scratch. He shines at the "you hit me first" part of a tussle.

The barn-owl must not be confounded with the tawny or wood-owl. It is this latter that hoots, not the barn-owl, whose note is far more of a screech than a hoot. The hoot of the tawny is a beautiful sound, though many people consider it weird and horrible.

In the Lake District—on dark, still spring nights, when there was just sufficient frost to make the air feel crisp and fresh, and no light save the sheen on the water—I have listened for hours to the owls calling to each other from the distant fir-woods.

There is a wonderful stillness on such a night; the waterfall, a mile away, sounds distinctly, though in the daytime we cannot hear it; the slightest puff of wind seems to cause quite an uproar in the larches. All the birds are silent save for the occasional quack of a mallard, or a dissipated thrush that has not had time during the hours of light to get through all its singing. Then from the silence, with a startling suddenness, come three short notes and a long-drawn-out "hoo-o-o," and away over the water floats an answer to the musical challenge, and the mountains throw the echoes back till the notes die in the frosty air. In my opinion, there are few bird-notes so musical and yet so weird, or so much in harmony with the surroundings. The old-fashioned "tu-whit, tu-whit, tu-whoo" gives no idea of the sound.

There are four-legged poachers, too; perhaps one of the worst of these is our harmless necessary cat. She looks so innocent and quiet as she sits purring by the fire with her claws all in their sheaths, and her toes tucked away under her breast. There is nothing but peace and innocence written on that placid countenance; there is no guilt, no blood there.

But what makes her so sleepy all day, and why is it she would not touch her milk or cat's-meat this morning? Oh, pussy! had we seen you a few hours ago, we should have seen more of the tiger than the cat. Sneaking up behind the bushes, never sharpshooter made more use of tuft of grass or mound of earth to cover his attack. Never assassin glided over the ground more silently. Now slinking along on her stomach, her head low, ears back, every muscle twitching, every hair bristling with expectancy. Then stopping behind a clump of leaves, her head and shoulders steady, save that the under jaw is chattering with anxiety; her hind-quarters swaying rapidly to and fro, as if to work herself up for the spring. Then with a leap, like a flash she is upon a young partridge or leveret, and those savage, fierce claws are buried in the neck of the victim.

Was she hungry? Had she not had a big meal that very day, and perhaps left half of it? Had the poor little bird or beast done her an injury, that she wished to punish it? No, we must look further back for the explanation of these midnight forays. Why do cats kill rats and seldom eat the bodies? Why do they make for every fly they can? The great law of hereditary instinct has left in quiet pussy the love of sport. All the carnivorous animals delight to kill far more than they require for food, and the cat has not lost the very English desire "to go out and kill something."

Her distant wild ancestors did most of their hunting in the night, her wild relations do now, and when she gets the chance she takes it.

I know of a barn where there are nailed up a range of tails, all telling their own tales of the reward of evil-doing. Long tails, short tails, thin tails, thick tails, black, white, yellow, tabby, all sorts and conditions of tails, from that of the poor wee kitten to that of the hoary old sinner of twelve or fifteen summers. How many a farmer's wife round has wondered "why Tom was not by the fire this morning," when perhaps Tom was making his last grim fight, tooth and nail, with the keeper's retriever—a hopeless task, as one poor lacerated leg is fast in the trap, and he cannot get fair play with the other three! Ere noon another tail is hanging on the barn, and Tom's carcase is breeding gentles for the young pheasants—providing food for those he tried to feed upon. Oh, the irony of fate!

Dogs, too, make sad poachers, but may be weaned of the habit, while a cat that once begins generally ends by deserting its home and, taking to the woods, becomes a regular Ishmaelite, till sooner or later retribution comes upon it.

Stoats and weasels are common in the country surrounding the Moss, though we never actually met with them on the moor itself. Our excursions there were principally of an entomological nature, and we used to pick up many common specimens and not a few rarities. The little striped heath moths were most abundant; the species with the finer wavy lines being much sought for.

The caterpillars of the larger moths were our principal quarry. We used to bring home our handkerchiefs full of the big hairy grub of the fox and drinker moths, only to lose them in the house, where they wandered about aimlessly, turning up weeks after in unexpected places.

Sometimes a hungry-looking grub would meander from under a fender, vainly looking for food on the carpet; or a coil of silk in the cornice showed where some poor half-starved wretch had given up its useless search, and done its best to turn into a chrysalis.

A little green caterpillar was diligently searched for—no easy task among the young

shoots of heather—and when taken home and fed up he became a gorgeous fellow indeed; bright green with two rows of brilliant golden spots. And such a big fellow, too, till all our lady acquaintances were afraid of him, and shuddered at the sight of the nasty grub. When it had at last reached about three inches in length, a change came over it, and instead of growing bigger, it became shorter and thicker, till it was small enough to spin a cocoon one-third its original length, and to turn into a pupa; in time to emerge a lovely Emperor moth, with four beautiful eyes on its wings. The cocoon of the Emperor is a very wonderful contrivance; an insignificant-looking blob on the heather, but most wonderfully constructed. It is bottle-shaped, with an opening at one end; inside the neck of this opening, a stiff array of bristles project forwards, meeting so as to close the entrance, easily pushed open by the emerging moth, but preventing any ichneumon fly or marauding ant from entering. Yet when the fly has come out, the ants sometimes use the empty cocoon as a house, building their cells inside. They are a lovely couple, the male and female, the lady much bigger than her mate, or mates I should say, but duller in colour—a very frequent rule in animal life, with the exception of the human race. There are many more males than females, consequently there is a great deal of competition; for the ladies naturally preferring the best-looking, the brightest-coloured males stand the best chance, and by the laws of sexual selection the males become more beautiful and stronger flyers. The female, not requiring to make herself look nice, remains a good plain colour; though probably protection from her many enemies may be a much more necessary agent in this matter.

Then we used to catch the little lizards and search for vipers, though we seldom found them, often, however, coming across their cast skins. The viviparous lizard was very common on bright sunny days; one we found was on the top of a stump, and one in an empty cartridge-case. Sometimes when we caught them by the tail, the owner of it would gracefully retire; and in our hands would remain a violently wriggling caudal appendage. The lizard did not seem to object nearly so much as the tail; and one which I timed moved violently for five minutes, and an hour and a quarter afterwards movement was slightly perceptible. Yet the lizard gets on well without it, and sometimes grows another, and on rare occasions two.

But Carrington Moss is gone now; grouse and curlew, twite and merlin have sought the higher moors. We must go further afield to find the viper and lizard, the Emperor moth, and small heath butterfly.

Manchester refuse has covered the cotton-grass and sundew. Locomotives whistle and labourers work where the butts were set up, and the keeper made his rounds. Smoke, grime, and filth have taken the place of the bright bloom of the heather and ling, and the sweet smell of the fresh-cut turf, and one of the most beautiful and interesting spots in Cheshire is now nothing but a name and a memory.

Since writing this article, a friend of the writer's visited the Moss, and put up a number of grouse out of a cabbage field—a striking instance of the reluctance of birds to leave their favourite haunts.

AFTER RAIN.

CLEAR shining after rain; the great grey seas
Sleep, scarcely ruffled by the wooing breeze,
That, heather-laden from the purple down,
Sweeps o'er the red roofs of the fishing town,
Moving the brown sails of the flitting skiffs,
Dying in the deep shadow of the cliffs.

Clear shining after rain; the August skies,
All glowing in the sunset's rosy dyes,
Lend a soft radiance from the golden west,
To spread a pathway over ocean's breast,
That heaves and murmurs, making music low,
To the still splendours of the afterglow.

So, with the shade and shine of April past,
And summer's passionate moments lulled at last,
The autumn's tranquil magic claims its hour.
The fruit, sometimes, is sweeter than the flower;
When the hot heart and eager baffled will,
In the clear shining after rain, lie still.

"ALL'S WELL."

A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I.

"ALL'S well!"

"All's well!"

The musical cry floated down from the two black figures that stood, vaguely outlined through the mist, high above the vessel's deck.

It floated down, in ever-widening ripples, round the great black hull and over the tossing waters. It was caught by the waves as they dashed from the vessel's prow, and raced past her tall sides, and foamed, and splashed, and eddied in her wake. It was caught up and thrown back, and carried on again, and swept out into the night. Out into the night, and the shrouding mist, and the rolling waste of the Atlantic. And there the ripples of its sound quivered for the last time and died away.

It floated down, already muffled by the mist, over the long, wet decks, to the ears of a man who paced to and fro in the after part of the vessel. It floated down and struck upon his ears, and vibrated in them like the ringing of a bell.

And the man turned in his restless walk and paced back again, with the cry still echoing in his ears: "All's well!"

He even repeated it to himself, softly, slowly, like one trying to reassure himself of some good news, too good to be as yet believed. He murmured it to himself with half-closed lips each time that he paused in that monotonous pacing to and fro. His footsteps fell upon the deck and beat out the rhythm of the same two words. And each time that he murmured them, each time that his listening brain caught that sound in the rushing of the wind, or the whistling of the ropes, or the steady tramp of his own footfalls, there was a smile upon his face that was not good to see.

His fellow passengers on board the ship knew him as the Silent Man. No doubt he had some other name; no doubt the Captain knew it, and the ship's books held it written down in full; but to all the passengers who knew him he was known only as the Silent Man. And there were few on board who knew him not; few who had not noticed the tall, gaunt figure that strode incessantly to and fro and up and down upon the deck; few who had not shrunk insensibly from that haggard face, and the lips that murmured for ever to themselves, but could hardly be brought to frame an answer to another; few who had not wondered who this man was, with his murmuring lips and his taciturnity, and his ceaseless tramp on the ship's deck—who had not speculated on the business that brought him on that voyage of the "Amsterdam" across the broad Atlantic.

Once more the bell sounded, and the voices rang out through the darkness. And the Silent Man still paced, with bowed head and folded arms, up and down, to and fro in the gathering mist.

Once again the bell was almost due to sound—but the cry that broke then from one of the two motionless figures on the look-out bridge was not the same. A cry of sudden fear, of wild alarm—with waving arms and frantic gestures, and hands pointing out into the darkness. Pointing into the darkness no longer now; pointing at something vast and shapeless, like a cloud rising from the water. Something that came swiftly, noiselessly, loomingly out of the fog, ever nearer and nearer, towering high above the vessel's masts, lit with a strange glimmering light. Something that a moment later, with a noise of crackling ice; with a horrible, rending, grinding jar; with a blow that made the great ship quiver like a compass-needle; crashed into the bows of the "Amsterdam."

For an instant she remained reared up against the iceberg, held fast in the jagged cleft that her prow had cut—then slowly, with a rushing swirl of water, slid back into the waves.

She was sinking in mid-Atlantic!

One of the first boats that was launched contained the Silent Man. He had taken his place quietly, almost mechanically. He was rowing now; and the beat of his oar in the rowlock seemed to him, as he gazed back at the misty outline of the sinking ship, to be still grimly, darkly, ominously echoing those words: "All's well!"

All that night they rowed, menaced incessantly by masses of detached ice, by floating wreckage, by foam-topped surf that broke over the open boat. All that night, and the next day, and for many days after.

Who can tell the horror of those days?

Of days when the shrouding mist robbed them of all hope of rescue; when the sun beat down through the damp-laden atmosphere for hour after hour on their uncovered heads; when no cloud in the sky came to screen them for an instant from its scorching, dazzling rays; when they drifted they knew scarcely whither, and heard afar off the fog-signals of vessels that passed them unheeded in the mist; when arms ached, and strength was failing, and hunger and thirst were doing their fell work, and courage and hope together were well nigh spent.

Of nights when the rising breeze blew through their saturated clothes and chilled the very life within them; when other boats, the companions of their fate, were missed and lost sight of; when the great rolling swell threatened in the darkness to overwhelm them, and each giant wave, as it passed, seemed only to delay the death that the next must surely bring; when the misery, and anguish, and despair were made deeper, and blacker, and more intolerable by the darkness.

Of days and nights later on, when the heat, and thirst, and weakness had done their work, and men began to rave, and sing aloud, and say wild, unmeaning things; when fever and death came amongst them;

when it was no longer a strange sight to see dead men—their bodies stripped, that their clothing might afford protection to the living—cast over into the grey waves without a prayer, almost without a thought; when the number of the living souls on board that little boat shrank awfully from day to day.

When there were at last but six alive—but five—and then, one dim, grey morning, only three!

The Silent Man still lived. Through all those days he lived—silent, unmoved, uncomplaining, working at his oar like a tireless machine, possessed, as it were, with a very greed for life. Through all those days he lived—untouched by hunger or thirst, by heat or chill, by fatigue, or exposure, or despair. Through all those days — unheeding everything around him, living in a sort of dream.

He had dreamt the same waking dream that night when he paced to and fro on the deck of the "Amsterdam." He had dreamt the same dream, but not quite all of it; had seen the same dream-figures, sleeping and waking, for twelve months past; but now—in his weakness and the horror of his daily life, with madness, and delirium, and death all around him—the dream-figures gathered colour, and vividness, and substantiality; they became to his disordered brain as living comrades, living and moving with him in a different world.

The scenes of the vision always recurred in the same order.

A cottage lying at the end of a long, shaded garden. The sun shining on the red-tiled roof, and the white muslin curtains in the little windows, and the rustic porch of trellis-work, on which a rose-tree climbs stragglingly. The garden, bright with flowering lilac, and drooping arbours of laburnum, and all the uncultured profusion of English country flowers. The air around filled with the fragrance of the blossoms and the spring-song of countless birds. And over all a sense of brightness, and happiness, and home.

A little two-year-old child, toddling with open arms and laughing eyes down the gravel path.

A fair-haired young mother, that runs and catches up the little girl, and bears her with merry laughter, held aloft in her arms, down the path to meet the dreaming man.

A moment of exquisite happiness, of mutual love, of joy so boundless that it seems to fill the soul, and brim over. A time of happy rest, of unimpaired content, when those two sit in the rose-twined porch, with the child playing at their feet, and watch the sun as he sinks to his rest.

A shadow that falls like a knife between the dreaming man and his wife.

A shadow, at first thin and grey, that seems, for all it is so slight, to rob the sunshine suddenly of all its warmth and brightness, and leave the evening cold and cheerless. A shadow that grows quickly broader, and blacker, and icier, until it blots out the figures of the wife and child, and darkens the little porch; that steals up swiftly, like a cloud of deadly vapour, round the red tiles of the cottage roof, and wraps all the picture at last in an impenetrable shroud.

A shadow that somehow gathers itself gradually into the form of a man's face—coarse, thick-lipped, sensuous, with gloating eyes and a false smile. A face that might, for all its coarseness, be made attractive by that luring smile, yet in itself cruel, and dissolute, and evil-looking.

Slowly the face emerges from behind that shadowy curtain. Slowly the features come dimly forth, as one by one they recur to the tortured mind of the man in his waking dream. Slowly the eyes of the dream-face turn and gaze down upon him mockingly.

Then a great surge of blood-red light floods over the gibing face, and hides it from view, and there is only the grey shadow left.

So far, the vision had always been the same; but lately, since the Silent Man had taken his passage on board the "Amsterdam," there had been something more which followed it—another ending to the never-ending dream.

An ending in which he sees a scrap of paper, traced over with trembling characters. A letter dated four weeks before from number twenty-six, Omaha Avenue, Lumberville, U.S.A.

The characters range themselves unerringly before his mind:

"I have sinned, and God knows I have repented I do not ask to be forgiven. That cannot be. But for our child's sake, for little Goldie's sake, come quickly. She who was once "YOUR WIFE."

The Silent Man's hand steals into the breast of his coat, and touches something there—something hard and cold, made of metal; something that he touches softly and caressingly, looking at his fingers after-

wards, to make sure that the sea-water has not reached it; something that in the darkness of the night, as he lies crouching in the bows of the tossing boat, he takes from his breast and examines and weighs in his hand.

And he listens to the washing of the waves as they splash on the boat's side, and laughs softly to himself as they, too, seem to bear the same message—"All's well!"

All was yet well—for what he had to do.

The morning dawned at last, when there were but two living souls besides himself on board the boat—dawned with a glorious uprising of the sun, to show that the deathly fog had rolled away, that all was clear as far as the horizon-line, that a sailing-ship was standing down towards them.

They were saved!

Who shall say what those men felt? Who shall describe the weeping and laughter intermixed, the incoherent cries of joy, the frantic waving of the emaciated arms, the wild ejaculations of confused thanksgiving and imprecation that burst from their blackened lips? Who shall wonder that, but for their failing strength, they would have cast themselves into the waves, and struggled to gain the boat that was lowered to rescue them; that in the moment of their preservation from a death but few hours distant their minds became distraught?

All save the Silent Man.

He alone was calm. To him alone their rescue seemed not unexpected. To him alone it was not a miracle like to the raising from the dead. To him alone it was but the fulfilment of an omen.

The sailing-ship that picked them up was bound for Rio; but the Silent Man was destined to dream that strange dream many a time yet before land was reached. For several weeks they beat about on the Atlantic. They were delayed by head-winds, thrown out of their course by constantly recurring gales, becalmed for three whole days on the equator. It was close upon two months from that glorious dawn when the little boat had been espied drifting on the waste of tossing waters, that they first saw the coast of Brazil—like a streak of bluish cloud rising behind the sea-line—opening out before them.

Their voyage was nearly at an end.

The bluish cloud resolved itself into dark-green masses of vegetation growing down to the water's edge; the vegetation became dotted and broken by the white roofs of buildings; the buildings collected themselves together, tier beyond tier, and blocked out the vegetation; a great concourse of masts and spars rose before the buildings: they were entering Rio Harbour.

It was long yet before the Silent Man resumed his journey. There were enquiries to be made—enquiries wherein the object of that journey was sought for, but not revealed; the story of the loss of the "Amsterdam," and of the awful days that followed it, had to be told and told again; a sum of money was raised and paid to him.

At last he was embarked for New York.

Then followed more days of dazzling heat, and glittering water, and the rising and falling of the ship's deck; days in which he lay inactive, watching the feathery clouds that floated across the sky, tracing the ship's wake as it wound over the glassy surface of the sea; nights in which he saw again the chill shadow creep up the cottage wall, and the face fashion itself out of the shadow, and the flash of blood that ended it all. And then his hand would seek the thing that he carried in his breast, and he would look at it stealthily in the moonlight and laugh exultingly to himself.

Once more he was on land, in the crowded streets of New York. He wanted to get to Lumberville; it is a long distance, almost half-way across the continent. But he had got plenty of time to do that which he had come to do.

His money would not suffice to carry him the whole way. For two days he travelled by the railroad, fancying in the motion of the cars that he was still at sea; expecting almost, as he looked from the windows of the car, to see the leaden-coloured waves, and the grey mist, and the tangles of floating sea-weed. Then his money was gone, and he must walk.

Rough, loosely-made roads, thick with sand and grit. Long day's tramps under the broiling sun, when the little hillock or the stunted tree, that looked so close at hand across the unbroken level of the prairie, was only reached after half an hour's weary walking. Starlit nights, when he cast himself down on the long, coarse grass, to sleep the deathlike sleep of exhaustion, to dream once more that never-changing dream. Homesteads of hewn timber, where he was made welcome in a rough, yet kindly fashion, where he was allowed to sleep, perhaps, on a bed of straw in the empty barn, where round-eyed children brought him milk and hunches of bread, and stayed behind to

stare at the silent, uncouth man. Cities of six months' growth, proud in their uprising buildings, which never would be finished, and their mighty streets, which never would be built. Cities in which he was received with cold suspicion, as another competitor in that struggling throng of hungered humanity, whence he was watched on his departure with unconcealed relief.

More homesteads, more aspiring cities, more of the rolling boundlessness of the prairies.

And then—Lumberville.

CHAPTER II.

It was half-past three in the afternoon when the limping figure—his clothes torn and grimed with dust, his face and hands scorched and seamed and blackened by exposure—slouched up under the shade of the eucalyptus-trees that skirted Omaha Avenue.

His right hand was hidden in his breast. His hungry, bloodshot eyes scanned the houses furtively as he passed.

Number twenty-six.

The man faltered. His hand trembled—even twitched once or twice convulsively—beneath his coat. His eyes turned—involuntarily, as it were—towards the house, and met the eyes of a woman who was sitting in the porch.

A middle-aged woman with a pleasant, comely face, who lay back in her chair, fanning herself and rocking gently to and fro in the shadow of the verandah. As the eyes of the Silent Man met hers, in a vacant, wild-looking stare, she ceased rocking and smiled, but not unkindly.

"Well, you're a pretty figure, anyhow," she said.

There was a pause. The Silent Man still looked at her. His hand still fumbled beneath his coat.

"Seems to me as you've been doin' a bit of walking," continued the woman, still smiling. "And by 'ppearances, it's been pretty rough. Are ye hungry?" she enquired suddenly with a jerk.

The Silent Man said nothing. The woman recommenced her rocking, and went on talking in her quiet, even voice:

"If so be, I s'pose I could give ye a bite and a drop of ice water, and not hurt myself."

The man wetted his lips with his tongue and spoke all at once, hoarsely, in a curious, gabbling whisper.

"Is there a man living here—Spencer?" he said.

The woman looked at him keenly.

"What has that got to do with you, anyhow? Are ye a friend of Mr. Spencer's?"

He started, and a sudden light came into his filmy, bloodshot eyes.

"Then he does live here? I am—a friend of his."

What is that hand doing that works nervously to and fro beneath his coat? That seems to be clutching something in its grasp, yet never comes from his breast?

The woman does not see it. She is looking across the road at a patch of golden sunflowers that grow in a hedge opposite. When she turns again to the Silent Man the hand is still.

"Well, Mr. Spencer don't live here now, so you're just wrong," she answered with some asperity, rocking herself a trifle more energetically. "And not much loss, either. And if you're a friend of his, I don't envy you, not much. A man who could go and leave his wife—or who was a wife to him, anyway, whatever she was—with a sick child and nary a dollar in the house, leave her and go clean off, he's what I'd call a skunk. See there!"

The man had to moisten his lips again before he could speak.

"And she?" he muttered.

"She? D'ye mean Mrs. Spencer? Well, she's dead, poor soul."

"Dead!"

He would have fallen but for the stem of the eucalyptus-tree. He leant against it shivering. His eyes gazed dreamily at the sunshine in the road—at the sunshine and the clump of nodding sunflowers, and the white pinafore of a little girl who was playing round their tall stalks. He even followed with his eyes the flight of a scarlet butterfly, as it fluttered quiveringly from flower to flower. It seemed as if his brain were numbed and unable to think. Try as he would, he could not think.

The woman looked at him compassionately.

"I'm sorry if I've skeered you," she said more gently. "I just didn't know as you were acquainted with Mrs. Spencer, or I wouldn't have bluffed it out like that. But it's the truth, anyway; so it 'ud have had to come out all the same, one word or one thousand. Maybe ye'd like a drink of ice water," she added quickly, as she rose from her chair.

The man motioned to her with his hand. It had fallen from his breast now.

"No, no," he whispered. "Tell me—how it was."

The thoughts were coming back to him now—black, evil thoughts, that he shuddered vaguely to remember; thoughts of what he had come there for; thoughts of how it had all ended with that woman's word, "Dead!"

"You'd best have something, for you do look real bad," the woman persisted. "But, there, if you won't, I s'pose you won't. Well," she continued, settling herself once more in the chair and folding her ample arms, "I've said this yer Mr. Spencer was a skunk, and a skunk he was to her! And she was frit of him, downright frit—couldn't abear of him, far's I could see, and yet daren't speak to him hardly, she was that frit. Well, sir, I told you that they had a child"—she was getting loquacious now, in her placid, droning manner, and rocking herself with a steady swing that seemed to stimulate her conversation—"anyway, there was a child with them, though I never could onderstand exactly whose 'twas, and he was more of a skunk to that child than it's in the natur of man to be to his own, and the child was took sick with the diphthery. That was when he bolted. Sick as sick the child was, poor little mortal! And then Mrs. Spencer come out—come out pretty strong, too. I hadn't had much of a notion of her while the man was with her—I don' mind confessin'—with her dolly face and fool ways and no more spir't than a chipmunk, but when she come out as she did come out, I kinder changed my ideas of her. Yes, sir! The way she nursed that child, and sat up with her, day and night, and Sundays and work days, and never took no food, so's she could buy medicines for the child, and got sick herself, and didn't care, but went on nursin' just the same—well, it was pretty strong! And I—you'd just as well change your mind and have something," the woman interposed earnestly, "you're lookin' that skeered."

The man shook his head irritably.

"Go on."

"Well, there ain't much more to tell. She took the diphthery then, as I said, and took it bad. And there was no one to nurse her—'cept what I did, and that wasn't much—and she'd sorter taken the grit out of herself with all the nursin' and watchin' and starvin' herself, and she couldn't seem ter stand out against it. And so—she died. That's all."

There was a long pause. The woman was very quiet. There was a gleam in her eyes, as she looked away across the sunny fields, as though tears were standing there. The man still leant against the stem of the eucalyptus-tree, twisting in his hands a fallen leaf that he had caught as it fluttered down.

"And the child?" he said at last. "Did she die?"

"No, sir!" the woman answered, still very quietly, "she didn't die. I guess the nursin' saved her. When she come round," she continued presently, "there was no one left to take care of her, if you onderstand; so me and my husban', considerin' the lonesomeness of the poor little critter, kinder 'dopted her, not having any children our own. And she's settled down with us just wonderful. It's real good to have her. Goldie," she cried, "come here, dearie!"

The man turned quickly, shaking with a strange spasmodic tremor.

"Goldie!" she called again softly—"Goldie!"

The little girl who was playing in the hedge by the patch of sunflowers rose and turned towards them. For an instant she hesitated, shyly, wonderingly; then suddenly she stretched out her little arms and began to run across the road.

"Daddy!" she cried.

The last tinge of golden light was fading from the crests of the waves. The last faint flush of the sunset was fading from the western sky. A tall, grizzled man, and a golden-haired girl, ripening into womanhood, were standing on the hurricane-deck of the ocean steamer, watching the flush as it paled and died away.

He was a rich man from out West, everybody knew. Had been mayor of Lumberville, some said, and had made a great fortune in live stock and grain. A self-made man, who had risen from nothing, but deserved his success by straightforwardness and hard work. And the girl was his daughter.

The flush faded from the violet summer sky. The stars came out, one by one, shining brightly in its clear depths. The man and girl turned from where they stood in the vessel's stern, and began to walk slowly back—in the direction where the sun, when it rose on the morrow morn, would rise on the rocky headlands and rugged cliffs that the man had last seen from the deck of the "Amsterdam," as they faded into the blueness of the sky, close on fourteen years before.

And as they turned, the clear voices rang out once more over the silent waters:

"All's well!"

"All's well!"

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART II.

"My dear Alice, do you see? There's your lover off with Miss Boyd already, and you in that disgraceful dress. I knew how it would be."

"It is nothing of the sort," cried Alice, coming out of her bewilderment. "She is going to sit to him."

"Oh!—another model!" A significant drawing together of lips between the words that said far more than many sentences.

"Don't be so tiresome, aunt," the girl said impatiently. "He has only gone to the gate with her. He couldn't well let her go alone. But I will change my dress before he is back. Tell him I shan't be a minute," and she ran to her room.

She accomplished the change in ten minutes, and came back breathless into the drawing-room, dainty and fresh in a green frock that Arthur admired immensely, her cheeks flushed beyond their normal healthy pink by hurry. But though it could not have taken three minutes to walk to and open the gate, bow out Miss Boyd and return, the drawing-room was empty save of Miss Downing.

"I suppose Arthur is in the garden," said Alice impatiently. It was too bad of her aunt to obstruct them by holding the drawing-room.

"No, he is not. He has gone to the Rectory to lunch."

"He cannot. He wasn't asked. He never said good-bye," said Alice, confounded.

"He must be asked by now," said Aunt Robina, "for the gong sounded just as Mrs. Waterton came out upon their lawn to meet them, and she couldn't help asking him to stay, with the gong in their ears, and I suppose the smell of lunch in their noses. Anyway, he went in. I saw them the whole way."

Alice forced a smile. "He is so eager about his picture, he wants to lose no time. Miss Boyd imagined she was required for a whole picture, but he just wanted to sketch some little thing that struck him as useful. It was really very obliging of her. He may have to stay for tea, too."

This was her way of discomfiting fate by being prepared for its worst. She did not in the least expect that Arthur would stay to tea at the Rectory. He had promised to walk with her to Holywell Mill that afternoon. If he had forgotten it in the imperious necessities of art, he would remember as soon as his small business at the Rectory was finished. She would be ready for him, but ready also for her aunt's sneers in case he should prove recreant.

Miss Downing might feel it to be at once her duty and her pleasure to snub her niece and embitter her innocent happiness and confidence, but she would have been as angry in her way as Alice herself if any real danger to the future were to present itself. "That woman looks a regular bad lot," she said. "I cannot understand the Watertons having her in their house. She is well-dressed and all that, but I don't like her eyes." ("Arthur does," thought Alice.) "She looks up to any villainy. I must ask Mrs. Waterton where she picked her up. I don't care to have her here while you are at home, a woman one knows nothing about. Not that she can do you much harm in three weeks."

"No, she can't do much harm in three weeks," said Alice distinctly, half to herself. "To be sure, you seemed to think there was little chance of my being married in three weeks."

"Heaven forbid you shouldn't," cried Miss Downing; "and my grey silk just home from Boazman's. You don't think, Alice——but I'll go over to Mrs. Waterton's, and ask her——"

"Ask her what?" interrupted Alice, with burning cheeks and fierce eyes. "Don't be so absurd, aunt. What can Mrs. Waterton know about it?"

"I suppose she knows who Miss Boyd is."

"But what can Miss Boyd possibly have to do with my wedding being put off?" the girl demanded, in passionate fear. "It is all nonsense. You began it yourself, prophesying evil, and I was repeating it for a joke. It is quite a joke—quite. How can it be anything else? Why do you make such a fuss about Arthur speaking to a perfect stranger, and walking across to the Rectory with her? And what on earth has it to do with your grey silk dress? You will be able to exhibit it at the Stranges' on Thursday week."

"As if I should think of wearing it before your wedding! And I suppose you will go in that old pink thing, and Miss Boyd will appear in something splendid, and cut you out again."

"No doubt," said Alice, shrugging her shoulders. "It can't be helped. I have nothing else."

"In my time girls kept away from balls

altogether so close upon their marriage. It wasn't considered nice to appear in public under such circumstances. Besides, it wasn't worth while."

"I'm glad I was not born in your time," returned Alice. "I want to get all the fun I can out of life before I am a married woman. It is always quite worth my while to dance with Arthur. I have only danced with him once in all my life—at one ball, I mean: when I met him. If the pink isn't decent enough, I can wear one of my new dresses."

"One of your trousseau dresses? You cannot! It would be most unlucky."

"I don't believe in bad luck. I will wear the white muslin just to show my disbelief; and then you'd better wear your grey, for, of course, wearing my white will put off the wedding for altogether, so you need not hoard it up."

"You are a silly girl, Alice," said Miss Downing mechanically.

She was busy pondering how to extract from Mrs. Waterton all possible information concerning Miss Boyd, then to look back at such information as had been already given, and examine it. It was only two days since Mrs. Waterton had said she expected a visitor. "Lydia Boyd, the daughter of an old friend of Henry's, from India, but now living in Curzon Street, Mayfair, such a very good address—suggestive of lacs of rupees. Henry wonders how she does it, for George Boyd held a very small Civil Service appointment, and his wife—he could not remember whom he had married, but she, perhaps, had money. We had not heard she was in England till she asked if she might come to see us." Then an aside that morning: "Very clever, though she doesn't look it. Heaps of money. Jane unpacked her things, and says they are fit for a duchess: silver-backed brushes, silk underclothing, all her gowns from Redfern and Kate Reilly. Dick Freeland dined with us last night, and called her a most fascinating person. She was in black lace, and simply blazed with diamonds. I can't see it myself. I suppose she is a gentleman's beauty."

"Mr. Freeland probably scented the silver-backed brushes and lacs of rupees," said Miss Downing stiffly, resenting such disloyalty to Alice, for whom he ought to be decked in willow. Perhaps Arthur had heard of those treasures now. They were all alike, all eager for money. Miss Downing was convinced that the smallness of Alice's dowry was to be blamed for the loss of Dick Freeland.

Miss Downing and Alice lunched alone. That over, the question was how to act so that, should Arthur not turn up in time for the walk, she should lose no dignity by having waited in vain. It was next to certain that he would not turn up. He was sure to take the sitting he had asked for, or why had he gone into the house? He would then return to his picture. So Alice said:

"If Arthur should finish his picture sooner than he expects, please tell him I shall be back in time for tea. I will go to see Violet Sandys, as I have this afternoon free, and that will save to-morrow."

Violet Sandys lived quite two miles away. She was at home, and very pleased to see Alice; very much interested in her approaching wedding and the preparations and plans. She was a very practical person indeed; the subjects of trousseau and tour had not half the charms for her that were provided by servants and furniture, that special branch of furniture which is the feature of to-day—the numerous inventions for the saving of trouble and space. Violet had them all at her finger-ends. According to her, Alice might dispense with servants altogether, and have her house cleaned and her food cooked solely by pulling electric buttons and putting pennies in slots.

"I do so envy you living in a dear little flat," she said. "It is no use attempting all those delightful things here. The servants won't have them, and mamma will have the servants. It is absurd nowadays, when we are all so poor, to live in a place like this," looking disparagingly round at the big Tudor house and its wide parks and gardens. "It is my dream to live in a flat," she went on, "where one can get at everything one wants without moving out of one's chair."

It cheered Alice up immensely to talk of pots and pans, carpets and carpet-sweepers. It made marriage seem such a real thing, far too substantial and too near to vanish at the glance of a pair of hateful grey eyes. She almost ran home—she was so afraid of keeping Arthur waiting, of losing one moment of his dear society.

It was a shock to hear he had not come, but she would not be silly and fanciful. Of course, now he had found the missing ingredient for his picture, he would work at it with redoubled vigour and get it finished all the sooner.

At seven o'clock Alice said: "He will not come now till after dinner." She and her aunt had their usual small repast, and

then Alice awaited her lover in the drawing-room with tea and cakes.

He came at eight, but he had not dined. He looked pale and worn, and was rather absent, as he was given to being after some hours' hard work, buried in his picture. For nearly two hours there had been no light for painting, yet he had had no time to dine, he said. Alice gave him tea. He protested at first; then took the proffered cup. The hot stimulant cleared his brain and he fell upon the cakes ravenously.

"Is Kilmeny finished?" asked Alice.

"Kilmeny!" For a moment he looked as if he had never heard of such a person. "No, of course not. I have had no time to go near it. I have been too busy."

"Busy, doing what?" suspiciously.

"Making sketches; sketches for great pictures, really great ones. Pictures that will mean fame—glory. Why can't one go on working, working, till the work is finished?—but night comes when no man can work."

He talked very strangely. Alice was not a person naturally given to fearfulness, and she flouted superstition as she would have flouted jealousy yesterday, but her flesh crept as she listened. Was Arthur going out of his mind from overwork?

She came to his side and put her arm round him, as if she would thus bring his mind back to realities and substance.

"You work too much, dear," she said in her calm, steady voice. "You need far more rest than you take. Come and look through these lists with me. I have been seeing Violet Sandys this afternoon, and she showed me some circulars they had just had from Maple. There is a dear little cupboard, only sixteen-and-six——"

He looked down at her absently for a moment, then admiringly, then most tenderly. She looked very fair and sweet in her light-blue evening dress, her soft brown hair and her pretty neck and arms all shining in the lamplight below the shade as she bent over the furniture lists. "You are a dear girl," he whispered fondly, and did his best to attend to qualities and prices; and Alice's heart beat joyously, for it was not now any alien attraction which struggled with his attention, but the superior delights of making love to her.

When he left at half-past ten, according to Miss Downing's rigorous canon of propriety, she asked him—not because of any doubt, but lest she should wake up in the early morning and be miserable: troubles and doubts always look so big and black in those chilly, hungry little hours before tea comes in to cheer—"How did you like Miss Boyd on farther acquaintance?"

The hall was very brightly lighted. The slightest flush or change of countenance must have been discernible to those searching eyes. He did not flinch in the least. His eyes did not swerve ever so slightly from looking into hers.

"Miss Boyd? The Watertons' visitor?" he answered, neither hesitatingly nor too readily. "I didn't like her particularly. She is very plain, and not very pleasant, and she has very little to say for herself. Are you much interested in her?"

"But you asked her to sit to you?"

"Yes, only for the eyes. She has a queer look in them, as if she were a person who 'saw things,' as they say of creepy people whom ghosts visit. It struck me as the very thing I wanted for Kilmeny's eyes; what is missing in your sweet, innocent ones," kissing them each in turn.

"And have you painted it into my face? How shall I look with Miss Boyd's eyes? Am I improved?"

"Sweet, you must learn to efface yourself in the cause of art. The face will be neither your face nor Miss Boyd's, but Kilmeny's. The eyes will make all the difference. I did not want to paint a pretty girl who had never known anything but what was good and pure."

"Would you mind letting me see?"

He drew a sketch-book from his pocket and turned over the leaves. He looked puzzled; then uneasy. Then he hastily attempted to pull the book back in his pocket, but Alice snatched at it and opened it; watched enquiringly, but unchecked.

It was full of strange figures, more or less complete; some draped, some costumed, some mere hasty confusions of lines, but all had the same face unmistakeably suggested—Lydia Boyd's.

She gave the book back to him with an unnatural little laugh.

"You have been very industrious, and Miss Boyd has been very obliging. Did you make all these studies from reality or from memory?"

"I forget; partly one and partly the other, I think. I had no idea I had made so many. She struck me as an excellent type for several subjects."

"She ought to be flattered."

"Well, I don't know. I am afraid she may think I have taken rather a liberty if she ever recognises herself, but of course she won't, for somebody else will have to sit

for the rest of the pictures. However villainous one's subject, she must be beautiful to please the public who buys."

"Do you think Miss Boyd is villainous?" Alice asked, startled.

"Oh! good gracious, no! I hope I implied nothing of the sort. She only struck me, I suppose," glancing through the narrow pages, "as a possible Circe—or Lucrezia Borgia—or old witch—with a considerable amount of beauty worked in."

Pyncholk was a very quiet place compared with London and Simla, but Mrs. Waterton exerted herself strenuously to entertain her guest with such material as was within reach. The Rector's means did not admit of any brilliance, but as it happened, they were giving a dinner-party that very night. It had been arranged a fortnight ago, before Miss Boyd appeared on the scene, even as represented by her letter of introduction, but Mrs. Waterton had fixed the date of her arrival so as to take in that unwonted chance of festivity. The guests were six elderly and dignified persons, exclusive of a curate thrown in to balance Miss Boyd. On the next evening but one, there was one of those small and early evenings beloved still in some old-fashioned country neighbourhoods, where the entertainment consists of high tea, games, and "trays"; specially convenient for the eating-up of the baked meats of a more stately dinner. To bid Miss Downing and Alice to this feast had been Miss Waterton's early errand two days before. Arthur Knollys, too, was bidden, as was seemly, to accompany his betrothed.

Arthur excused himself from tea on plea of work, but promised to turn up later. Mrs. Waterton loudly lamented his absence. They were such a dull set of people; a London man brought so much life to such parties. He would have known all sorts of new games and other devices for making the evening go off well. She was afraid Miss Boyd was tired of cards.

The curate, Mr. Lee, who was of course of the party—where men are scarce they are compelled to play many parts—resented this imputation upon the resources of Pyncholk. Miss Boyd must not suppose that their games were not up to date. They could turn tables, raise spirits, tell fortunes by palmistry and characters by many divers methods, at Pyncholk as elsewhere. He proposed they should hide a pin, or set somebody to guess the number of a five-pound note—Miss Boyd could do that, he was positive.

Miss Boyd, to Mrs. Waterton's surprise, looked startled and annoyed.

"I can do nothing of the sort," she answered brusquely. "Such games are the stupidest things in the world."

"Yet you must have seen very strange things in India," said the curate, anxious in his turn to display his extensive and profound reading.

"Not so strange, perhaps, as they seem," she answered impatiently. "I hope you don't mean to put drawing-room telepathy on a plane with Indian juggling?"

"If you do," said Dick Freeland drily, "I should hardly think it a proper amusement for good Christian folks, to say nothing of parsons."

"It is mere skill, like whist or chess," said Mr. Lee. "There is nothing occult in it. When it isn't skill it is fraud."

"Then you didn't mean to play fair?" said Dick.

"Mr. Lee means to show us his skill," said Miss Boyd, who was certainly out of temper. She was dressed in grey, and looked plainer than usual, but she wore handsome opals on a band round her throat, and looked as usual like a very rich woman, and a stately one.

Mr. Lee was put on his mettle at once, impelled by even a stronger force than vanity. Was he not an unmarried curate and Miss Boyd a rich woman? He wished to stand well with her.

"Let me bandage your eyes," he begged, "and I will undertake to make you do in ten minutes whatever Mr. Freeland and Miss à Court choose."

She submitted with a scornful smile. Dick and Alice bent their heads over a strip of paper, pencilled it, and handed it to Mr. Lee.

"To creep along the piano top," he read, and nodded approvingly.

He placed his finger-tips on the back of Miss Boyd's neck, and there was a breathless pause. She did not move. The curate waited patiently, then suddenly dropped his hands and muttered: "It is no use with such a subject." He was very pale indeed.

"You've soon given in," scoffed Dick Freeland.

"Try me," said Arthur Knollys, who had come in quietly while Miss Boyd was being bandaged.

"No, don't, Arthur," cried Alice, with an uncalled-for amount of apprehension, seeing how Mr. Lee's occult powers had just been discredited. Miss Boyd's parted lips

betrayed intent attention, though she could not see that Arthur was withdrawing his offer in a reassuring glance at Alice.

"Yes, do," she said. "Let us give Mr. Lee a chance."

She undid her bandage, and handed it to him. He put it round his own eyes at once. But it was Mr. Lee who drew back now.

"It's all rubbish," he said, "I will have nothing to do with it; and I have a sick call to make."

"The charlatan exposed," said Dick rudely, as Mr. Lee hurriedly bade adieu to his hostess.

He heard perfectly well; indeed, Dick had no intention of concealing what was really a joke. He only smiled a sickly smile and took his departure, leaving his reputation as a thaumaturgist dead for ever behind him.

"Who would have thought the little chap was so sensitive on the subject?" said Dick contritely.

"How could you vex him so, Dick?" asked Alice reproachfully. "He never said good bye to me."

"Or to me, for that matter," said another girl. "He looked so awfully ashamed of himself."

"Please knot this thing for me, somebody," said Arthur, fumbling with the bandage. "Come, isn't anybody going to perform on me? I'm a first-rate subject, they tell me."

"You 'will' him to do something, Alice," said Mrs. Waterton.

Miss Boyd, who was nearest, knotted the handkerchief ends behind his head. Alice was hurt. She had asked him "not to play," and he had chosen to obey Miss Boyd's wish in preference.

"I cannot," she said. "I don't believe in it. Mr. Lee couldn't do it."

"Because he was resisted by a stronger intelligence," said Arthur thoughtfully, in a very low voice.

Miss Boyd snatched the bandage she had just tied from Arthur's eyes.

"Why did you say that?" she asked, with astonishing asperity.

"Say what?" asked Arthur, looking bewildered. "Did I speak aloud? I beg your pardon if I complained. You did pull a little tight."

"Well, it is a very stupid and disagreeable amusement," said Mrs. Waterton. "It doesn't seem to amuse anybody—quite the reverse—so I propose we make up a rubber, and the young people sit down to a round game."

Miss Boyd joined the Rector and his wife with Miss Downing at the former diversion, and the rest set to work shuffling cards and dividing counters.

"Is she cross, then?" Arthur whispered to Alice as they bent their heads together over the heap of red and white ivory. "Is it because I was so late? Really and truly I could come no sooner."

"Why did you say that B. woman"—the expression was only used to guard against ears peculiarly sensitive to the suppressed surname—"was so intelligent when it was all her stupidity?"

"I didn't say it, she said it," said Arthur.

"Why, I heard you!" cried Alice disdainfully.

"You must have heard her. I heard her close behind me as she fumbled at my head. I never spoke; if I did I couldn't have said that. She is as dense as a log."

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 299.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR WILLIAM KARSLAKE was still alive; but death stood at his bedside, and with that grim power North Branston closed in a hand-to-hand struggle. Day after day rose to find the object of the combat still hovering on that borderland which lies so close to, and yet so infinitely remote from, the life of every day. Day after day passed; and the advantage was now with one, now with the other, of the combatants. The shadow of a great suspense lay over Hatherleigh Grange. All the afternoon long, carriages stopped at the lodge gates with polite enquiries and condolences from every direction. But Lady Karslake saw nobody; the only visitor from the outside world who crossed the threshold in those days was North Branston.

North Branston grew haggard and worn; the case was a somewhat rare crisis, upon the obscurity of which modern medical science had only recently thrown light. In modern methods—so modern, indeed, as to retain something of the nature of experiment—lay his only chance of success, and his professional enthusiasm was strung up to its intensest pitch. And not only were his mental faculties kept constantly at full stretch. To fit a six mile drive into his round of work twice or even three times in the twenty-four hours; to spend sometimes an hour, sometimes considerably more, in one visit to a single patient, involved a concentration of his other work which told heavily on his physical forces. Leisure and rest became empty words for him. His meals were uncertain in everything except the haste with which they were eaten; and the quantity of sleep he achieved he himself best knew.

It was generally understood in Dr. Vallotson's household that Sir William Karslake's critical condition created a considerable amount of extra work. But—because constant oral statements make more impression upon the unobservant than unannounced fact—an impression prevailed that it was upon Dr. Vallotson's own shoulders that this extra work fell.

After North Branston's attendance at Hatherleigh had been going on for three days, Dr. Vallotson announced that it was imperatively necessary that he himself should put his own sufferings on one side and attend to the practice.

"Somebody must attend to it, my dear," he assured his wife pompously; "old Mr. Bronson and Mrs. Jones have not been seen for a week. I must go out to-morrow."

The words were spoken in a tone of heroic self-immolation, but the reasons against his going out on the morrow existed solely in his own imagination. He was perfectly restored to health. His gouty foot had regained its normal proportions, though he still elected to clothe it in a boot of portentous size. During the days which followed, Dr. Vallotson seemed little less incessantly employed than was North Branston himself. He was in and out of the house a dozen times a day; the family hours had to be incessantly rearranged that he might "fit in his work;" and North Branston was kept in a constant state of irritation by the difficulty of securing horses for his own use.

"Do you expect me to do my work on foot, sir," demanded Dr. Vallotson, his

small figure dilating with indignant self-importance when North, with the angry urgency of over-pressure, pointed out the difficulties thus thrown in the way, "with my foot in its present condition? Where would you be, I should like to know, if I should have to lie up again? You must arrange your engagements to fit in with mine; that's all I can say."

The current of vigorous movement which was stirring the men of the household had apparently touched Mrs. Vallotson and Constance also. It was as though the cloud which had hung about the house during Dr. Vallotson's illness had broken up into strong electrical disturbances, and by the force of reaction the stillness and monotony of these days had given place to an activity which was their very antithesis.

No longer confined to the house by her husband's demands on her attention, Mrs. Vallotson had thrown herself with almost restless energy into the task of re-introducing Constance to her friends. Day after day she went about with Constance, paying calls, giving and accepting invitations, fulfilling all the engagements that the social life of Alnchester could provide. Day after day saw her with never an unoccupied moment, never a solitary half-hour.

To Constance the change came just at the psychological moment. A few days more of unrelieved domesticity, and eruptions of a more or less natural and unphilosophic character must have ensued. She threw herself into the movement which obviated this disastrous contingency with the vigour of one who sees the first steps to a great end plainly before her. To "go about" was the necessary preliminary to popularity, and popularity was the necessary preliminary to the inauguration of a new era for Alnchester.

That popularity might linger; that she might go about without exciting any conspicuous interest in the Alnchester breast; was a contingency that had not occurred to Alnchester's would-be regenerator. To be received everywhere with a few kindly but absent-minded words, and then to find herself relegated to a subordinate position before one all-absorbing topic of public interest, was by no means what she was prepared for. Graver forebodings as to the nature of the Alnchester intellect than she had hitherto allowed herself to indulge began to fill her mind. Apprehensions that she had hitherto put aside from her as altogether too degrading to the human race began to give her gloomy moments. And the contempt with which she regarded the topic which thus preoccupied Alnchester knew no bounds. Some slight expression of her feelings became at last imperative to her.

"I suppose it's quite impossible," she said, "for any one in Alnchester to take an interest in more than one subject at a time. But it makes conversation rather monotonous, mother, don't you think? We've paid three calls this afternoon, and we've talked about nothing but Sir William Karslake and his illness."

Ten days had passed; it was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and Constance and her mother were on their way to pay their fourth and final call for the afternoon. It was growing dusk, and Constance could not see her mother's face as Mrs. Vallotson replied:

"You will probably talk of nothing else at the Bennetts', either; so you'd better make up your mind to it, Constance. Everybody is very much interested in Sir William Karslake."

The statement accurately represented the condition of affairs. Hatherleigh Grange was one of the great places of the neighbourhood, and it had stood empty for nearly a year. "New people" at the Grange would in any case have excited a considerable amount of curiosity. That Sir William Karslake's name was one known in a larger world than that of Alnchester rendered it of no moment whatever, so long as he remained at a distance. But when he became Alnchester property, so to speak, the fact quickened attention as adding lustre to the city. By falling ill with the eyes of the world thus fixed upon him, Sir William Karslake had reached the apex of public interest.

It was with a little impatient sigh that Constance followed her mother into Mrs. Bennett's drawing-room — Mrs. Bennett was the wife of a clerical neighbour— and even as they were received by their hostess, the girl heard the name that was becoming so obnoxious to her, proceeding from a corner of the room where two ladies sat together in such earnest conclave that they could hardly break it off to shake hands with Mrs. Vallotson and her daughter. The conventional greeting was hardly uttered when the younger of these two ladies, a sharp, sallow-faced woman, turned from Constance to Mrs. Vallotson and said eagerly:

"Now I dare say you can tell us, Mrs. Vallotson; your husband was an old friend

of Sir William Karslake's, I understand, and he would know, of course. Did he—Sir William Karslake, I mean—go out to India in sixty or sixty-two?"

Mrs. Vallotson seated herself deliberately, and unloosed her mantle at the throat.

"You seem to have been misinformed, Miss Goode," she said composedly. "My husband only met Sir William Karslake in the course of the last three weeks, and that only in a professional capacity."

Miss Goode's face fell.

"You don't say so!" she said. "Well, really now, that's very odd. How things do get about, to be sure! I do assure you that Dr. Vallotson himself——now, who was it told me that Dr. Vallotson had told them—what was it they said he'd said?'

Miss Goode became temporarily lost in the mazes of her memory, which was, indeed, somewhat overstored with sayings which had been repeated to her. And the word was taken up by Mrs. Bennett, a round, comfortable person, the salt of whose life was gossip.

"But you know of him, Mrs. Vallotson?" she said cheerily. "I dare say you know of him, though you haven't known him personally. They say he was a great anxiety to his father in his young days. Sadly wild, I've heard."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Vallotson. She spoke with a dry indifference, which made Constance mentally congratulate herself on having a mother so superior to the other mothers of Alnchester. And since topics of conversation were more or less subject to the dictation of the doctor's wife, a slight pause ensued. Mrs. Bennett produced a little commonplace from the Alnchester stock, which Mrs. Vallotson received with hard civility. But as far as the other two ladies were concerned, it fell flat. Mrs. Bennett herself was but half-hearted in her support of it, and after a few minutes of lame conversation another pause ensued. It was broken this time by the lady who had been discussing the subject of the hour with Miss Goode when Mrs. Vallotson and her daughter appeared upon the scene. She was a limp lady, with a large and helpless countenance.

"Perhaps Mrs. Vallotson can tell us, at least," she suggested feebly, "how the poor man is to-day—Sir William Karslake, you know. I was told that they expected a crisis of some sort to-day. I was told that somebody said he would be either dead or out of danger before to-night."

"A doctor's wife is the last person in the world who can give any information as to the condition of his patients," said Mrs. Vallotson.

She rose as she spoke to take leave.

"I assure you, Mrs. Elliott, I know no more on the subject than you do."

A passing wonder crossed Constance's mind, as to how it was that her mother knew even so much of Sir William Karslake's condition as her words seemed to imply. Some testy words of Dr. Vallotson's had put Constance herself into possession of the fact which Mrs. Elliott had stated with so much melancholy satisfaction and foreboding. And it had annoyed the girl more than once during the afternoon, to feel that she herself was not wholly untouched by the prevailing epidemic, inasmuch as she found herself dwelling now and again on the thought of the crisis that was coming and going, while the man who was passing through it was being gossiped about and discussed. But she knew that her mother had not heard Dr. Vallotson's words; she knew that she never enquired after any of the patients. And she had supposed that her mother knew nothing of what the day held for the inmates of Hatherleigh Grange.

It was late when they left Mrs. Bennett's house, but to-night Mrs. Vallotson seemed to be in no hurry to get home. She walked slowly, and when they had nearly reached their own house, a small piece of shopping that she wanted to do occurred to her, and she went back to the town—making Constance accompany her — to accomplish it. It added half an hour's walk to an afternoon that had already contained a good deal of exercise; and when they finally turned into their own road again for the second time, Constance was tired out. Her mother must be very strong, she thought to herself, to show no sign whatever of fatigue. Mrs. Vallotson was walking slowly, it was true, but it was with the dilatoriness of a woman who is in no haste to reach home and rest. To Constance, upon whose nerves the idea of Sir William Karslake and the crisis which she knew must now be over, either for good or ill, had rather fastened, the very tardiness of her mother's step was an added weariness. North would be back from Hatherleigh by this time, the girl said to herself, and she really would like to know—though it was very foolish of her, she told herself—whether the stupid man were alive or dead.

She followed her mother quickly into the hall.

"It's late, Constance," said her mother. "Go and get ready quickly, or you'll be late for dinner."

Constance hesitated for an instant. There was a ring of command in Mrs. Vallotson's voice, and habit prevailed over desire. After all, she could hardly have explained her wish to see North Branston, which was, indeed, shrivelling into nothingness now that it was possible to gratify it.

"Very well, mother," she said, and she turned and went away up the stairs.

Mrs. Vallotson stood at the foot, and watched her out of sight. Then she, too, turned and went down the passage towards North Branston's consulting-room. The door was ajar; and as she drew nearer North Branston's voice became audible—North Branston's voice, confident, satisfied, elated, as it had never sounded in that house before.

"He'll do," he said. "There's no fear now. It couldn't have gone better. But, by Jove! Vallotson, six hours ago I thought I was beaten."

Mrs. Vallotson had stopped suddenly. She put out one hand towards the wall of the passage as if to steady herself. Then she turned, and retraced her steps. She went up the stairs to her own room, and shut the door.

CHAPTER X

"WHERE is my mother, Sarah?"

It was about ten o'clock on a bright, frosty November morning three weeks later. Constance had come leisurely out of her room, dressed for walking, and had addressed the question to the housemaid.

"Mistress is in the store-room, miss," was the answer.

With that air of unhurried serenity pervading her small person, which is the result of a consciously judicious portioning out of time to philosophic ends, Constance pursued her way downstairs. She went on to the back premises, and pushed open a half-closed door.

"I'm going now, mother," she said.

It was a large room, lighted only by one small and heavily barred window; and in spite of the scrupulous cleanliness and neatness of all its arrangements, it struck chill and gloomy by comparison with the brightness of the passage, along which the winter sunshine lay in ruddy bars. Occupied with the contents of one of the cupboards, stood Mrs. Vallotson, alone. She turned her head slowly as Constance spoke.

"Very well," she said. "To the Bryanstones' is it?"

There was a subtle suggestion about Mrs. Vallotson's voice which is only to be described as a suggestion of disuse; it was like a voice influenced by long intervals of total silence. Its tone, however, was not one calculated to arrest the attention of the inaugurator of a new era.

Constance did not come into the room. She stood in the doorway, her girlish, daintily dressed figure, as it caught some of the sunshine behind her, contrasting sharply with the sombre stillness of the room before her.

"No, mother," she said; "to the Eliots'. I'm going for a walk with Kitty, and then we are going to read together. I'm going to tea with the Bryanstones this afternoon. I told you of the engagement two days ago."

There was a strong touch of the condescension of the instructor in the clear young voice, as Constance uttered her explanation; her last words were, further, just tinged with a certain lofty consciousness of her mother's forgetfulness; and the deference which would have subdued the whole, three weeks before, was only very faintly represented. The tone was the outcome of the independence to which the girl's words witnessed.

That independence was a developement of the past three weeks, which had seemed to the future regenerator of Alnchester so perfectly desirable and natural, that it never occurred to her to consider that it had come about with rather untrustworthy rapidity.

Mrs. Vallotson had apparently fulfilled all the social duties demanded of her for the present, and her energy in that direction seemed to have been followed by a reaction in which she was even disinclined for society; but she had placed no obstacles in the way of any visits to her contemporaries, which Constance liked to pay by herself. She seemed, on the contrary, desirous that the girl should go out. Constance went out accordingly with assiduity, preparing her ground over afternoon teas, country walks, and German readings; and winning a half-unwilling, half-admiring recognition from the girls, who thought her "dreadfully clever."

There was a moment's pause now before Mrs. Vallotson answered her. Then she said briefly, "Very well!" and turned back to her cupboard.

"Good-bye, mother," said the girl brightly.

"Good-bye, child."

Mrs. Vallotson did not turn round. She was counting table-linen, and she continued her work in the same mechanically concentrated manner after her daughter had gone.

Another hour had passed when she came out of the store-room, locking the door behind her, and went into the dining-room. She was looking cold and numb, but she seemed to be hardly conscious of the fact, for she did not approach the fire. She seated herself by the table, and took some needlework from a basket.

It had been remarked on more than one occasion lately—remarked with some unconscious satisfaction by those female friends who had been wont secretly to consider that the well set-up and well-preserved doctor's wife looked too young for her years—that Mrs. Vallotson was ageing. She seemed, indeed, to have taken one of those strides forward by which some women advance in life. She had become very thin; her tall figure had lost its mature substantiality, and had become gaunt; wrinkles had developed about her eyes, and her eyes themselves had a sunken appearance; her hair, hitherto untouched by the hand of time, was growing grey about the temples—growing grey and greyer, as it seemed, from day to day. Sitting there now in the quiet, dull dining-room, with the winter daylight full on her face, the pinched, blue look of cold about her seemed to accentuate all these signs of age, and she looked in her sombre stillness like a woman twenty years her senior.

Nearly two hours had gone by, and except for the mechanical movement of her fingers she had hardly stirred, when the door opened. She glanced up instinctively. The new-comer was North Branston, and as her eyes fell upon him, an added shade of stillness fell upon her face. She looked back at her work in silence.

North Branston was looking rather preoccupied, and all the more disagreeable characteristics of his ordinary expression seemed to be in abeyance for the time being. He walked up to the fireplace, and stood with his back to it, looking down thoughtfully at the carpet. Mrs. Vallotson worked on without a word.

"Adelaide!" he began. He spoke abruptly, but it was the abruptness of constraint rather than antagonism. "You came to a decision a few weeks ago rather prematurely."

Mrs. Vallotson's fingers continued to move slowly but unceasingly, and there was a perceptible pause before she said:

"What do you mean?"

North Branston changed his position. He folded his arms and leaned his shoulder against a corner of the mantelpiece.

"As to calling on the Karslakes," he said. "I dare say your principle as to the country people is all right in itself. I don't profess to understand these things. But I don't see the necessity for going out of your way to be uncivil."

He paused, but Mrs. Vallotson did not speak, and after a minute he resumed in a voice touched—involuntarily, apparently—with its customary dry antagonism:

"I suppose it is considered uncivil when one woman expresses a wish to make the acquaintance of another woman, and that other woman—there being nothing against it but her own will—declines to take the necessary step! At any rate, Adelaide, I think it right that you should know that Lady Karslake has more than once expressed a hope that you will call upon her."

He made this simple masculine deduction and uttered his bold statement, with a man's total absence of comprehension of the social compulsion they contained. They had evidently been for him rather a declaration than an argument.

"Is Sir William Karslake quite well again?"

The words came from Mrs. Vallotson abruptly, and she looked up for the first time.

"He has quite recovered from his late attack."

"Does he go out?"

"He will go out if the weather keeps dry—yes."

North's replies had been uttered drily and grimly. He paused a moment after uttering his last sentence, his brow darkening. Then he said abruptly:

"Of course there is no more that I can say on the subject. I shan't attempt to argue the point. I've told you how the facts stand, and it's for you to decide upon your course of action. I shan't be in until dinner-time."

He strode across the room as he spoke, and disappeared.

When Mrs. Vallotson sat down to lunch with her husband and daughter, the numbed look of cold had passed away from her face, and with it there seemed to have gone something of that set repression which had settled upon her features so gradually as to be unnoticeable. Her colouring was deeper than it had been for days. She spoke little throughout the meal, but that

little was sharp, and to the point. Luncheon was nearly over when she said abruptly:

"Where is North this afternoon, Robert?"

"Where is North?" returned Dr. Vallotson. "He has gone out to Arlcote. He is going to take Royston and Petershill on his way back. If he had listened to me, he would have gone to Hatherleigh. Very inattentive, I consider him! Very inattentive. Did you want the carriage, may I ask, my love?"

"Yes!" said Mrs. Vallotson slowly. "Can I have it?"

Dr. Vallotson pursed up his lips and pondered importantly.

"Well," he said, "I really hardly know what to say! It isn't—I must own that it's rather inconvenient this—where did you—now where were you thinking of going, my dear?"

"I want to go to Hatherleigh, to call on Lady Karslake."

Dr. Vallotson drew himself back in his chair with a movement which was almost a jump of delight, and the pompous uncertainty of his expression melted in an instant into a boundless satisfaction.

"To Hatherleigh?" he said. "My love, to be sure! At what time, now—at what time shall I tell James to be ready? To call on Lady Karslake? Quite so. Quite so. And Connie is going with you, of course. Quite so."

He uttered the last words in a tone of radiant and condescending comprehension as of a man who sees and deigns to recognise a scheme perfect at all points. As he spoke them Constance looked up quickly, but before she could speak Mrs. Vallotson said decidedly, and rather harshly:

"No, Constance is not going." She stopped, and then added, addressing the girl but not looking at her: "You've got something to do this afternoon, haven't you, child?"

"I'm going to tea with the Bryanstones, mother."

"The Bryanstones?" began Dr. Vallotson fussily. "Surely the Bryanstones can be put off, my dear. Surely you had better——"

"There is no reason why they should be put off." Mrs. Vallotson had risen, and her tone was conclusive. "Tell James to be ready at half-past three, Robert."

THE BRITISH STANDING ARMY.

It is to be feared that we, as a people, are too much given to take things for granted; to accept our national institutions as they stand without enquiring as to how they arose, grew, and became what they are. We have our form of government, our navy, our army, our police, but we find them what they are, and are too often content to make that the end of our information about them, and do not take the trouble ourselves to seek out their origin and growth. Perhaps it is owing to this fact that until now—late in the nineteenth century—has been left the publication of the first volume of the first consecutive and exhaustive history of our Standing Army.*

The volume, which only carries the history up to the year 1700, falls naturally into three divisions: the rise of the Standing Army and its progress until 1688; the wars in Ireland and Flanders; and lastly, chapters on Arms and Accoutrements, Clothing and Equipment, Drills and Exercises, Punishments, and other matters relating to the internal direction of a military force.

It was on the fourteenth of February, 1661, that the seeds of the British Army—to the number of one hundred and seventy troopers, and between nine hundred and a thousand infantry—were collected on Tower Hill. These soldiers were part of the army which, under General Monck, had played so important a part in the Restoration to the throne of King Charles the Second. As they were there assembled, four Commissioners drove up to them, informed them that they were commissioned to thank them for their past services, to promise them their arrears of pay, and to enlist them into the King's own service. The troops were thereupon disbanded, and immediately afterwards re-enlisted, and became the "Lord General's Regiment of Foot Guards," and the "Lord General's Troop of Guards"—the Lord General being added by way of compliment to Monck. The regiment of foot was the foundation of the Coldstream Guards—Monck's army, in his march from Scotland, having halted at the border town of Coldstream, and having from this received the nickname of "Coldstreamers."

Although the "Coldstreamers" were thus the first regiment really enlisted into the Standing Army, there was a regiment already existing which had undoubted rights to priority. This was formed of Englishmen who had followed the Stuarts into exile, and who had been formed into six corps when Charles

* The "History of the British Standing Army," by Colonel Clifford Walton, C.B., Assistant Adjutant-General. (Harrison & Sons.)

and his brother James were fighting for France against the Spanish. After the Restoration these six corps were amalgamated and sent to Dunquerque under Lord Wentworth, and a second battalion formed in England. The two battalions were further amalgamated in 1665, and as the King's Own Guards, or First Foot Guards, this regiment took precedence, as it still does, of the Lord General's or Coldstream Regiment. In the same way the Lord General's Troop of Guards had to give way to a number of Royalist gentlemen, who had served as a body-guard to the King during the civil war; had followed him abroad; and at the Restoration became the King's Own or First Troop, and the Duke of York's or Second Troop, of the regiment still famous as the Life Guards. Afterwards Monck's became the Second, and the Duke of York's the Third Troop. The Royal Horse Guards were, really, the survival of another Puritan regiment, Colonel Unton Cook's, which was disbanded in December, 1660, and re-established on the sixteenth of February, 1661, under the title of the Royal Regiment of Horse; and it still takes precedence next to the Life Guards as the Royal Horse Guards Blue.

To return to the infantry. At the Restoration a regiment of Scottish mercenaries was in French employ, and Charles, using as a pretext a rising of religious fanatics, demanded that this regiment should return to the service of its own sovereign. The regiment, three thousand strong, was brought to England, and although it again returned to France, and served the French King for sixteen years, it "takes rank in the British army from the year 1661, as the First or Royal Regiment of Foot." Charles, having started his army, was not content with what he had but was on the outlook for adding more regiments, and when Tangier was ceded to England by Portugal, he brought forward the need of additional troops for a garrison as an excuse. A regiment of foot and a troop of horse were accordingly raised by the Earl of Peterborough, and shipped off to Tangier. The infantry, on returning from Tangier in 1684, was termed "Our Most Dear Consort the Queen's Regiment of Foot," and is known at the present day as the Second or Queen's Regiment of Foot. The troop of horse raised at the same time, together with three more raised later for the same purpose, became the King's Own or Royal Regiment of Dragoons, and still appears in the Army List as the First Royal Dragoons.

The next chance for a new regiment appeared in 1665, when war broke out with the Dutch. In the Dutch service was a regiment of Englishmen, and Charles, perceiving the advantage of obtaining a compact body of veterans, demanded their return home. On their return they were naturally termed the Holland Regiment, but became in time the Third Foot, or the Buffs. By this time Charles had an army as strong as that of the United States of America previous to the civil war, and in addition to the three regiments of cavalry and five of infantry there were many independent companies and troops.

Dragoons were the next to be raised—the term dragoon being most probably derived from a weapon, a dragon, which was a large-bore flint-lock carbine, very short in the barrel—the dragoons originally being simply mounted foot-soldiers, able to act either as cavalry or infantry. The regiment which was raised for Tangier, and which afterwards became the First Dragoons, was not converted into dragoons until 1684; so that a regiment of Scots Dragoons, now known as the Scots Greys, was the first dragoon regiment in the English army, although the Tangier regiment takes precedence of them.

In the meantime at Tangier British soldiers were defending the British fortress against the Moors, who were striving their utmost to drive them out of the place. The "defences consisted of a series of outworks, so placed as to form a complete outer line of forts within musquet shot of each other, and they were connected by ditches, and in some places by palisadoes, the whole being three miles in compass on the land side." Around the fort the fight waged furiously—attacks and sallies, mines and countermines, and hand-to-hand encounters. Of the defence of one small redoubt and fort we have an account which reads like some deed of heroism of the Mutiny days. In the fort were twenty-eight men and a sergeant, in the redoubt twelve men and a sergeant, and against them the whole fury of the Moors was concentrated. In the fort the English defended themselves until the roof gave way, then they retreated to the tower and blew up the rest of the house with the men upon it. For another hour the little party defended itself, and then man after man dropped; hope of relief from the Lines gave place to certainty of death; yet still did the sergeant encourage his men, still did the soldiers stand by their sergeant. Seven men only,

besides the sergeant, were left when a corner of the building gave way, and the tired Englishmen saw themselves exposed to the open attacks of those whom they had so long defied. They resolved to take no quarter, and they made a rush for their lives. One or two escaped, but the gallant sergeant did not live to tell the tale of his own doings."

The redoubt was defended with equal bravery, and when all hope was gone the remnant of the little party determined to try and fight their way to the Lines. The sergeant remained behind, prepared a train, and blew up the redoubt and some forty of his foes. These and other actions of a like kind inspired the Moors with a lively sense of English courage, and after a new regiment had been raised—the Fourth Regiment of Foot—a truce was arranged, in the midst of which the Government determined to abandon Tangier, and in 1684 the troops returned home.

When James the Second came to the throne, he set to work to remedy a fault in his army which had been severely felt at Tangier—the want of sufficient cavalry—and in the first year of his reign six regiments of horse were raised, which now exist as the First to the Sixth Dragoon Guards. Of these the First and Second were raised in London, the Fourth—it does not appear whence the Third came—in the Midland Counties, and the Fifth on the borders of Wales. The Sixth was composed of various independent troops which were raised against Monmouth, formed into the "Queen Dowager's Horse." This regiment is now known as the Carabineers. This name was not given it until William the Third made a Carabineer regiment of it—the troopers being armed with rifled carabines instead of smooth-bore musquetoons. At the same time two regiments of Dragoons were raised—the Queen's, recruited in Middlesex, which now bears the title of the Third, or King's Own, Dragoons; and the Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment, recruited in Somersetshire and the West Country, now ranking as the Fourth Dragoons. In 1685 were added also nine regiments of infantry. Amongst these was one which had the peculiarity, for those days, of numbering in its ranks no pikemen, all the men being armed with fusils, which gave to the regiment the name of Fusiliers. This regiment exists at present as the Seventh Royal Fusiliers. The remaining regiments now rank from the Eighth to the Fifteenth of the line; the Midland Counties supplying the Eighth and Tenth; Gloucestershire the Ninth; North Devonshire the Eleventh; East Suffolk the Twelfth; the Thirteenth was recruited in Buckinghamshire; the Fourteenth in Kent, and the Fifteenth in Nottinghamshire; while in the following year the Scots Foot Guards were added to the English establishment. At the same time Camps of Instruction were formed; Brigades and Divisions formed; a drill book was issued; and the "Articles of War were rendered more distinct and more comprehensive." And in the last year of King James's reign two more regiments were added—the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth, both of which were raised in Middlesex.

Of the second part of Colonel Walton's book, which deals with the wars in Ireland and Flanders, we need not say much, for as wars they are to be found described in any English history, but inasmuch as new regiments were added from time to time, they are to the point. Amongst these new regiments were the Inniskilling Dragoons, and the Fifth Royal Irish Dragoons. The Inniskillingers, to whom William was indebted for keeping the enemy in check while an army was being raised in England, also raised a regiment of infantry, which is now the Twenty-seventh Regiment. These Irish troops soon showed themselves, as they have done ever since, amongst the best troops in the British Army. Other foot regiments were the Royal Regiment of Ireland, now the Eighteenth Royal Irish; the Twentieth, Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth; and the Nineteenth, which had been formed by volunteers who had joined the Prince's standard on his landing. The Seventh Dragoon Guards were formed in like fashion.

The story of the death of General Schomberg, which took place at the Battle of the Boyne, is very curious.

On the Boyne was a small hamlet, Oldbridge, which had been abandoned by the villagers at the first sign of a battle; the men, all but one poor deformed, lame man, or "bokkha," having joined James's army.

"This bokkha refused to quit the place; he had over his turf-hearth an old duck-gun, and, damning the heretics who were coming to lay waste his home, he swore that he would not budge until he had had a shot with his family gun at the bloody-minded Prince of Orange. On the morning of the battle, when the Protestant forces began to move, the bokkha concealed him-

self in a double ditch close to the Old-bridge ford, so as to be covered from the shot of both friend and foe. Looking sharply about from his hiding-place, he soon made out the principal personages in the enemy's army, and resolved to reserve his fire until these big game came within range. Thus biding his time, he at length viewed the charge of Hamilton's and Parker's Horse, the wavering of the French refugees, the fall of Caillemote—and he perceived with joy a horseman ride fast down to the river wearing a coat richly laced, an embroidered sword-belt, a sash of golden network, and many plumes in his hat. This was the very man he had so long waited for; surely this must be the Prince, and he was about to ride close by his hiding-place. The determined bokkha kept his eyes steadfastly on this officer, and when he saw him point the soldiers towards his now empty, ruined home, he decided that this man, even if he were not the Prince—and he seemed too old to be so—would at all events be a worthy sacrifice to his outraged Penates. He examined the priming of his duck-gun and made ready. Chance favoured him, for at this moment the officer turned in his saddle to speak to the soldiers, and his horse, availing himself of the distraction, tugged at the reins and stooped for a good long drink. Before the rider could drag his horse's head up again, the bokkha found time for a deliberate aim: the duck-gun was discharged, and the great General Schomberg fell to speak no more."

In Flanders, among the regiments which made their first appearance was the Twenty-first Foot, better known as the Scots Fusiliers, and the Twenty-sixth Cameronian, which regiment derived its name from the religious sect from which it was originally recruited. About the same time several independent Scotch companies were embodied into a regiment, and they became many years later the Ninety-fourth Regiment.

Leaving the history of this rise of the army and the enlistment of the various regiments, we come to the last division of the book—that dealing with the armament, equipment, and internal arrangements of the army, which is perhaps the most interesting part of the narrative. Amongst the arms now obsolete, which formed a large part of the infantry equipment in the days when the army was started, was the pike, which was in the form of a spear, with a flat and pointed head, mounted on a staff from thirteen to eighteen feet long. The firearm in general use at the time was the matchlock. What would a Sergeant-Major of the present day, with his men armed with the Magazine Rifle, think of such a weapon as this: "Attached to the lock of this musquet was a pan, also a cock the hammer of which was somewhat in the form of a bird's, serpent's, or dog's head; this head was split, and a screw compressed or eased the slits. The piece being loaded first with powder and then with ball, some powder was poured into the pan; the pan was then shut to keep this 'priming' from dropping out, and to keep it dry. When the soldier wished to fire, he fastened his burning match into the slit of the cock, opened the pan, looked to his priming, presented, and pulled the trigger; the match, falling into the powder in the pan, fired it. Between the pan and the breech of the barrel communication was established by means of a small hole; when the piece was being loaded, the grains of powder were naturally rammed and shaken down close to this hole, and when priming, the soldier took care to perfect the communication of the powder in the pan with that in the barrel; thus the explosion in the pan caused the ignition of the charge."

These musquets were gradually superseded by the fusil, in which a flint and steel took the place of the match. The fusil was also provided—as are modern rifles—with a sling. Carbines also—surprising though it may seem to find rifled weapons in use so early—were used in the cavalry; carbine meaning a gun that is rifled, being derived from the French carabine; carabiner, the verb, meaning to rifle, spoken of a gun-barrel. Of course, these antiquated guns were constantly being improved—even as are the finished weapons of the present day—and cartridges in the course of time came into use. The first cartridge was "a ready-made charge. A piece of stiff paper being rolled on a roller into a cylinder of the size of the calibre of the musquet, a separation was made with a wad in the middle; the larger part was then filled with powder, the other held the bullet; and the two ends were firmly closed up. When loading, the soldier bit off the end of the powder partition, so as to permit of the communication of the powder in the breech with the priming." Hand grenades were another offensive weapon of the period. They were "small shells of iron of from one to two inches in diameter, filled with powder, and having a touch hole into which was inserted a wooden tube filled with a fuse

compounded of fine powder tempered with charcoal dust. The grenadier having quickened the fuse from his lighted match, threw the grenade with the hand; such missiles falling thickly, and bursting amongst knots of the enemy, caused not only wounds but possibly a confusion that might be turned to advantage by the attacking party." Sometimes grenades were made of pasteboard, wood, or tin, and in this case they were intended to set fire to works, or to throw light on the enemy.

As to the uniform of the army, the Royal Livery or Uniform of England had always been red, and the Royal bodyguard, even in the time of Henry the Eighth, was clothed in scarlet cloth. Infantry soldiers in the time of Elizabeth "had overcoats or cassocks of some motley or other sad green colour, or russet," but under this they wore a doublet which most often was red. Of course in the Commonwealth army dull colours were the general wear, but scarlet reappeared at the Restoration. Almost all the new regiments took the national colour for their uniform, for, being permanent troops and forming part of the Royal Standing Army, they had, as such, a right to the Royal Livery; but a few line regiments —amongst them the Sixteenth, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth—wore blue coats. The changes in shape and cut of coats, hats, boots, and other military equipment, are too many to be enumerated here, but one point worthy of comment is the mode of the supply of clothing to the troops, which, objectionable though it was, continued to quite a recent date. "A certain portion of the daily pay of a soldier was set apart for subsistence. The remainder over and above the subsistence was termed the off-reckonings. Out of the off-reckonings was deducted one shilling in the pound on the whole pay, besides one day's pay per annum, for Chelsea Hospital and other purposes. . . . The net off-reckonings were passed over to the Colonels, and out of them the Colonel was to clothe his regiment." Now though these net off-reckonings were but barely sufficient to cover the cost of clothing, a very considerable income—from two hundred to six hundred pounds a year—was screwed out of them by the Colonels. "Some Colonels were not satisfied with misappropriating the off-reckonings, but even trenched largely on the soldiers' subsistence money," the Colonels having the power of appointing the regimental agent through whose hands all the cash transactions passed, and of making all the contracts. "Sometimes the contractors would offer a Colonel a direct bribe of a lump sum, reaching even to as much as six hundred pounds for the year. . . . Sometimes the bribe took the form of a percentage on the contract. Sometimes the fraud was perpetrated by the simple plan of accepting a contract with nominal prices higher than the actual prices to be paid."

What is termed the Regimental Economy was much the same from 1660 to 1700 as at the present time, though some ranks and duties were different. The Colonel was the chief of a regiment, and he was responsible for the whole discipline and economy of the corps under his command. The Major of the period had to perform duties which were a combination of those now performed by both Major and Serjeant-Major. "He was the medium of communication betwixt the Colonel and the regiment; he received and distributed into their proper channel all orders, detached parties and guards, and visited and inspected the latter; he was to drill and exercise the regiment, to correct errors or disorder on parade or on the march, and to see that the men had their quarters in due order and were properly treated." The Major and the Colonel, in addition to those ranks, also generally commanded a company, and drew, in addition to their pay as Colonel and Major, pay as Captains. Captains and Subalterns existed as at this day, while a rank which has ceased to exist was that of Captain-Lieutenant which, when the Colonel held a company, was the title of the senior Lieutenant who acted for him as Captain of it. In the same way the Lieutenant-Colonel and the Major, when they held companies, were represented by the two next senior Lieutenants. Cornets and Ensigns, together with a sub-grade of Cornet, a Guidon, which existed in the Life Guards alone, have disappeared. Although the theory was that promotion was by selection guided by merit, purchase played a large part in it. Amongst the prices paid were in 1681, five thousand one hundred pounds for a colonelcy in the Foot Guards; 1684, one thousand six hundred pounds for the captaincy of a troop of Horse; while between 1680 and 1685 as much as six thousand pounds was paid for a Captain's commission, and two thousand one hundred pounds for a Cornetcy. Exchanges of officers from one corps to another were permitted in the seventeenth century.

The Standing Army has from its earliest days been recruited by voluntary enlist-

ment, and the recruiting party with its gay ribbons and drummers and fifers was the stock method of recruiting practised. "It was termed recruiting by the 'Beat of Drum,' and the Warrant authorising any one to recruit in this manner was styled 'Beating Orders.'" This voluntary enlistment served very well for some time, but it failed at length, and in Scotland, when four years of war had drained her of her surplus population, in 1694 resort was had for a period to conscription and pressing. Pressing for the army in England was illegal, and this is how it was done: "A man named Tooley was found to be keeping a house in Holborn, apparently legalised as a sort of house of detention for sailors suspected of intended desertion, but which was used far more for a regular trade in recruits for the Army. It must be premised . . . that Captains of Troops and Companies could draw no pay for men whose places in the ranks were vacant on the days of muster, and that while they had a great pecuniary interest in vacancies between the periods of muster, they had thus an even greater interest in completing their quota against these periods." He could afford to pay as much as one or two pounds a head to crimps, and thus Tooley flourished. "Every reader has doubtless heard of the 'King's Shilling.' This shilling was one day's pay, the acceptance of which by a soldier was necessary to substantiate in the eye of the law any charge of desertion; for the best proof of a man's enlistment was to be found in the fact of his having drawn pay. The great object then of either recruiting sergeant or crimp was to get a man to accept a shilling . . . and in a moment the free citizen had rendered himself amenable to the necessarily harshest of penal codes, martial law. Mr. Tooley and his servants were adepts at this game of passing the shilling. Sometimes a shilling was slipped into a man's pocket without his knowledge. Mr. Tooley's agent then got into conversation with him at an alehouse, or other place of public resort, and by-and-by declared him to be enlisted; the victim might assert that he could easily prove that the story of his taking the shilling was false, for that he had only a few pence in his pocket; a constable was called and his pockets were searched, and of course the shilling produced therefrom to his unutterable confusion and discredit, and off he went to Mr. Tooley's in Holborn. Giving a man the shilling while drunk, and suffering him to get sober at Mr. Tooley's, was a common thing. Occasionally, when Mr. Tooley's agents were quite sure of the lookers on, if the victim made too much fuss over taking his shilling, he was simply held down, gagged, and tied, and then the money being forced into his pocket, he was carried off to Holborn." At first there was no limit of service in our army, and no rule of age for recruits.

The Drill of the period must have been cumbersome and slow to learn. In the "Posture or Exercise for the Pike" there are no fewer than thirty-five words of command, while in the "Posture or Exercise for the Musquet" the words of command run up, in the case of the matchlock, to thirty-six, amongst them being the quaint ones of "Handle your match," "Blow your match," "Cock and try your match," "Take the wad from your hats."

Perhaps the greatest differences between our days and the early days of the army, are the punishments meted out to our soldiers, which were in the olden times harsh in the extreme. It was imperative "that punishments should be deterrent in their severity, and that the faintest symptom of insubordination should be visited with penalties apparently disproportionate to offences trivial in themselves but weighty in the possible sequel." It was also necessary that they should be prompt in execution. Soon after the establishment of the Standing Army all offenders were tried by regimental Courts-martial, from which an appeal lay to the General Court-martial. As at present the junior officer of the Court gave his opinion first, and the senior officer last. The sentence was carried by the majority of votes, the President having the casting vote. A later modification was that in death sentences the majority was not to be less than nine out of thirteen. After the Revolution it was customary for all death sentences to be sent up for approval by the General Commanding-in-Chief, and later on it was laid down that all such sentences required the approval of the sovereign before being carried into effect. Shooting was the ordinary manner of carrying out the death penalty, but in baser crimes hanging was resorted to. Burning with fire at the stake was the most ignominious mode of military sentence of death, and two instances of this occurred in Flanders in King William's reign. The lash in various forms was, of course, the principal mode of punishment. Mutilation and branding were also in vogue at this period,

and finally we come to the only military punishments which survive, namely, imprisonment and punishment drill. The Stocks and the Wooden Horse were also common punishments in the early days of the army. The crimes which were punishable in the early days of the army were no fewer than fifty in number, beginning with mutiny and ending with uncleanliness of accoutrements.

Space does not admit of telling of the Military Honours and Rewards during this period; nor of the Staff and Field Administration of the army, together with the Medical and Religious Administration, but enough is here set forth to show that the volume treats exhaustively of its subject, and will well repay perusal by those who take an interest in one of our foremost institutions—our Standing Army.

MOON MYTHS.

The moon has been worshipped among nearly all the nations of the world from time immemorial; indeed, her cult has been asserted to be much older-established than sun-worship. Samoyedes and the people of Borneo adore her yet, and the Caribs come from their homes at new moon, and raise a great cry in her honour. Swart Nubians rejoiced in the new moon's rising just as did the cultured Greeks, who pictured her as a wild huntress, more girl than woman, with a cold breast unsunned by love for any man, mortal or demigod, and sweet, cold lips that have never kissed any mouth but Endymion's, asleep on the mountains. Moslems clap their hands at the sight of the new moon; the Finnish girl, Christian though she be, drops a curtsey and a word of greeting to Kun, as his silver mask shines whitely over her; the Peruvian peasant hurries home out of the cold moonshine, afraid of the stern eyes of Mama Quilla; and the Egyptian fellah lounges across the sands where the Sphinx's shadow lies black at his feet with a prayer on his lips or in his heart to Thoth—Thoth, the Master of Wisdom, the Lord of the Ibis, in whose absence the fair land of Khem has been brought down very low. Swabian girls still refuse to spin by moonlight, "lest they should anger Her," they say vaguely; and in Germany children firmly believe in Horsel or Holda, whose boat is the moon, whose flower is the flax, and whose delight it is to reward industrious little maidens. Dante makes the man in the moon Cain; in Egypt he is Horus, held to the breast of Isis, his mother and the moon; in France he is Judas; and in some parts of England the fancy obtains that he is a man who broke the Sabbath by gathering sticks from a neighbour's forest-land. In Rantum the man in the moon is a giant, who, at flowing tide, stoops to pour water on the earth, and at ebb-tide stands upright, in order that the waters may subside. Devonshire folk say that the figure to be seen in the moon is that of a dog. Other people say that it is Endymion, or Isaac bearing on his back a burden of wood for his own sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Danes fancied that the moon is a cheese made from the milk that has run out from the Milky Way. Pearls and all other white stones, except diamonds, are in sympathy with the moon, according to the Rosicrucians, and should be worn on Mondays. A curious Eastern fancy is that the figure in the moon is that of the pattern wife, Ina, who weaves the clouds into white cloth; and who, after the lapse of many years, sent her mortal husband back to earth by the rainbow bridge in order that death might not defile her heavenly home. The cat and the panther are both connected with the moon in some vague and occult fashion; indeed, in Australia, the moon is represented as a native cat, and also in Egypt. In China the Celestials say that there is a frog in the moon, a metamorphosed beauty, called Chango, who drank the liquor of immortality, and was caught up to the moon, where she was changed into her present form.

"THE LIFE OF THE PARTY."

A COMPLETE STORY.

"I call it too bad of the manager!" said Mrs. Trefusis with warmth. "He knew I particularly wished to sit next the Vernons at the table d'hôte, and now he has changed their places to the other table!"

"What has he done that for?" asked Mrs. Lambert languidly.

"To make himself disagreeable, I should think," responded the irate lady. "He muttered something about 'new arrivals,' and 'arranging the tables.' New arrivals, indeed! Why should he want to put them next to me? And one never knows whom one may meet in these Riviera places."

"That is true," murmured Miss Sparks beneath her breath. "One is forced to put up with decidedly second-rate people very often."

"I dare say they will be gamblers from Monte Carlo, or something of that sort," continued Mrs. Trefusis. "Well, anyhow, I don't mean to have anything to do with them. One isn't obliged to be pleasant to people one doesn't like."

"Certainly not," said Miss Sparks sweetly.

We were all sitting in the hall of the "Hôtel Beau Rivage" at St. Antoine, waiting for dinner. The "Beau Rivage" is a small and—we flatter ourselves—a particularly select hotel, patronised almost exclusively by our own countrymen; or rather, I should perhaps say, our own countrywomen, for the sterner sex were, as a rule, conspicuous by their absence. Also, as a rule, we had arrived at a time of life when we liked to be comfortable, and were by no means unduly set upon excursions, or such-like festivities. A gentle stroll in the morning, when our respective apartments were in the hands of the chambermaids; a retirement to the said apartments after lunch "to write letters"; then another stroll, or a lounge in the garden to listen to the band; dinner, and "early to bed;" was a programme that suited a good many of our party admirably. I don't say the younger members may not have found it a little dull; but, dear me! we didn't think it necessary to lay ourselves out for their amusement. They must do as their elders did. The manager made us very comfortable, and only young and ardent spirits, like pretty Mrs. Trefusis, rebelled against his autocratic rule.

But I am wandering from the party gathered in the hall. The grievance was discussed with much animation. Most of us sympathised with the victim of the manager's misdirected zeal; but I am bound to say that the absent autocrat would have had many supporters, had not his cause been championed by that unpopular spinster, Miss Sparks.

"I do pity Miss Long for being companion to that crabbed old thing," whispered a pretty girl to her bosom friend. "She has been confiding her woes to me. It is so funny; because, when we were here last winter, Miss Sparks had quite a different young lady with her, who told us just the same sort of things."

"Yes, my dear"—the voice is the voice of Mrs. Macdonald of Glendrummond, and the dear old lady is making an effort to change the subject, for the air is becoming charged with electricity—"yes, my dear. I always wear them in the evening, wherever I am. Laura said to me before I left home, 'Why don't you take your diamonds to the bank, mother, and then they will be safe while you are away?' But I said, 'My dear Laura, whatever is the use of having pretty things, and keeping them locked up at the bank?' So I always bring my solitaires and a brooch with me, for I like to look as nice at an hotel as I do at home; in fact, there are more people to see one abroad."

"And quite right too, Mrs. Macdonald," responded Mrs. Lambert's slow, pathetic voice, "and I'm sure in a respectable hotel like this, things are quite safe. That's what I'm always telling Henry when he says I oughtn't to keep so many bank notes in my box. But money is so puzzling, I never can understand circular notes, so I have to make Henry send me good Bank of England notes when I want money. He sends me the first halves, and when I have acknowledged them the others follow. I know where I am with bank notes, and Herr Engel is always willing to change them for me."

"Ah, glad enough to get them, I dare say," said Major Roberts.

But here the welcome sound of the dinner bell put an end to conversation, and we all trooped into the "salle-à-manger."

I sat opposite Mrs. Trefusis, and looked with some interest at the new arrivals. They were two young Englishmen, one looking the picture of health and good temper—it was he who was next to Mrs. Trefusis—while the other, I imagined, must be rather an invalid, for he scarcely ate anything, although his neighbour did his best to coax him to try the various dishes as they came round. Mrs. Trefusis maintained a dignified demeanour, and only responded in the most distant manner to the young fellow's advances. I suppose he saw the lady was not disposed to be friendly, for he made very few attempts at conversation, and contented himself with such unobtrusive attentions as passing the salt.

Now Mrs. Trefusis is by nature of a companionable disposition, and I felt sure she would not long hold to her resolution.

"You ought to try this sauce, Mrs. Blake. You really are making a great mistake in passing it. You can put it on the side of your plate, and then, if you don't like it, you are not obliged to eat it," remarked Mrs. Macdonald in a very audible voice to her "vis-à-vis."

I saw the cheerful young Englishman

begin to quiver all over, and then, somehow, Mrs. Trefusis smiled, and behold! the foes were friends.

"Dear old lady! she is always giving elementary instruction," said she who had sworn to hold no communication with the new arrivals. "No one but a born idiot would be the better for her advice, but we all accept it gratefully. I suppose because we don't exactly know how to help ourselves. We can't so much as eat an orange without being told that our way of peeling it is wrong!"

The ice was broken, and after this the two got on famously. Mrs. Trefusis posted her neighbour up in all matters relating to the hotel; and he, in turn, gave her much information about himself and his friend.

"So the young gambler from Monte Carlo proved agreeable company after all," said Miss Sparks, as she passed Mrs. Trefusis on her way to her evening game of bézique with the long-suffering companion.

"Very superior to some of the visitors!" replied Mrs. Trefusis promptly, and then she turned to me. "I really am very sorry I talked so stupidly. They are a couple of as nice young fellows as I have ever seen. Mr. Benson is here to look after his friend, Mr. Harley, whose health has broken down from overwork. He is a famous public singer, and has been ordered to give his voice complete rest for three months. It is most unfortunate for him, because he has had the offer of several good professional engagements in London, which he has been obliged to refuse."

"Harley, Harley," murmured Miss Sparks, "I don't remember ever having heard of any distinguished singer of that name."

"Of course he has a stage name," replied Mrs. Trefusis loftily. "I will ask Mr. Benson what it is."

At that moment the gentleman spoken of entered the saloon, and advanced to the only lady whose acquaintance he had yet made.

"What do you generally do in the evenings?" he asked genially. "Nothing? Good gracious, that is very dull! Surely we can have some music. Don't you sing, Mrs. Trefusis? A little? Oh, that's all right; and I'm sure there must be others who can do likewise. I only wish Harley were strong enough to stay downstairs and give us a song or two, but he has got to go up and lie down for an hour after dinner. However, as he gets stronger we may hope for a little help from him, and till that time comes we must do the best we can. I can strum on the banjo a little myself. I wouldn't do it if Jack were here to jeer at my feeble efforts; but if you won't tell, I will accompany any young lady who will give us a song, provided it isn't very classical."

After this our evenings became quite festive; and we all—with the possible exception of Miss Sparks, who resolutely played bézique with Miss Long—declared that Mr. Bob Benson was the life of the party. He turned out to be a very fair musician, and got up concerts and entertainments of various sorts every evening. "What, running away, Mrs. Macdonald?" we would hear him saying reproachfully. "Nonsense, we can't spare you from the audience; you always applaud so kindly. Don't you know we are going to act some charades, and you really must patronise us? Letters? Oh, come now, Mrs. Macdonald, you know you write letters all the afternoon, and you can't want to write them all the evening too! Besides, Jack is feeling so much better that he hopes to come down when he has had a little rest, and I really don't think it will hurt him to give us one song. Do you know he is ever so much better for his stay at St. Antoine. It is a great pity we can't stay much longer, but Jack's mother is going to Mentone in a week or two, and then we shall have to move on and join her. I'm sure I shall be sorry enough to leave this place, you have all been so good to me. Look here! Let's organise a little excursion in honour of Jack's recovery. It is positively disgraceful; we are none of us seeing any of the lions of the neighbourhood. I vote we all go to the Islands one day. We just go to Cannes by train, you know, and the boat service across is very good. I'm sure Herr Engel will pack us up a good lunch, and we will get back in time to write the usual letters before dinner. What do you say, Miss Sparks? Don't you think we could manage it?"

I fancy Miss Sparks struggled between a desire to say "no" and a wish to see the Islands, with some one else to have the trouble of arranging the excursion. In the end the latter feeling triumphed, and she said "she should be happy to join the party," and that "Miss Long could attend to such correspondence as was absolutely needful that afternoon." I don't know how Mr. Benson managed, but he somehow contrived that no one should be left out of any amusement that he planned, and it soon

got to be understood that Miss Long was not to be left at home.

The charades were a great success, and Mr. Harley actually spent a short time in the salon that evening. However, we didn't get the promised song, though the invalid really seemed very fairly well and strong, and entered heartily into the idea of a visit to the Islands, which was fixed for the next day but one. Mr. Benson proved a capital cicerone. He went to the station, and got the officials to reserve carriages for our party. He attended carefully to the commissariat department—including the transport service—and when Thursday came, with perfect weather, even John Gilpin's "six precious souls" were not more "agog" for their jaunt than we were for ours. Only one contretemps theatened to mar our enjoyment.

"I must rush upstairs and stir up that lazy Jack," said Mr. Benson, after we had waited a few minutes for his friend. Up he went, whistling gaily, but soon returned with a serious look on his usually cheerful countenance.

"I don't know what to do," he said. "Jack felt awfully faint just as he was getting ready, and it is quite impossible he can go, though he is feeling better now. I don't like to leave him. Do you think you can manage without me?"

"Certainly not," replied Miss Sparks with decision. "You have made all the arrangements, Mr. Benson, and none of us have even tried to understand them, not expecting it to be necessary. Surely Mr. Harley cannot be so selfish——"

"You don't know Jack, Miss Sparks, if that is what you think of him! On the contrary, he insists upon the programme being carried out. It is only that I don't feel comfortable at the idea of his being alone. However, he is better, and has promised to send for the doctor if he has another attack; and, after all, we shall be back by five, so I think I'll risk it."

So off we went at last; and, once clear of the hotel, Mr. Benson seemed to dismiss the subject of his friend's illness from his mind, and was, as usual, the life of the party. Sometimes, it is true, there was an absent expression on his face, but he did not suffer his anxieties to spoil our pleasure. We strolled about the pretty island; had a lively al-fresco lunch; read up in our guide-books the story of the imprisonment of the Man in the Iron Mask, and Marshal Bazaine's escape; and unanimously offered a vote of thanks to the originator and organiser of the expedition.

"It seems quite a pity to return to St. Antoine so soon," said Mrs. Trefusis. "Couldn't we wait for the next train, Mr. Benson?"

"Certainly," replied that gentleman courteously, "if you will kindly excuse my leaving. You see, Jack is on my mind——"

But we would not hear of parting with our guide, so the programme was faithfully carried out to the end.

As we entered the hotel, the manager advanced and put a note into Mr. Benson's hand.

"The other gentleman has gone; but he said the writing would explain," said he politely.

"Gone. What on earth do you mean?" gasped our young friend, looking too bewildered to open the letter.

"The writing will explain," repeated the manager.

"If you will read the note, there might be some chance of understanding the matter," suggested Miss Sparks.

Mr. Benson tore the letter open, and read it aloud:

"DEAR OLD BOY,—After you left, I had a telegram from my mother, saying she had reached Mentone, and asking me to join her at once; so I packed up immediately—your things as well as mine—paid the bill, and was off by half-past three. I know you mean to be back by five o'clock, so you will have time to catch the five-twenty and join us to-night. Please say good-bye for me to all our kind friends, and explain matters to them."

Loud were our lamentations when we realised that the life of the party was taking his departure thus abruptly. In a few minutes the leave-taking was over, and the companion to whom we owed so much pleasure had vanished from our midst. We all stayed in the hall bewailing our hard fate, and congratulating ourselves that we had at least accomplished our excursion before the blow fell, until we had only a few minutes left in which to make ourselves tidy for dinner. The bell sounded, and we gradually reassembled, but not with our usual punctuality.

"What has become of Mrs. Macdonald?" asked Mrs. Lambert.

As she spoke the old lady came hastily in.

"There have been thieves in the hotel," she exclaimed; "my diamonds are gone!"

There was a horrified silence. Then:

"I never did like that young man," said Miss Sparks grimly.

"Whatever do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Trefusis. "You surely don't suggest that Mr. Benson is the thief! Why, he was with us all day, as much as you were yourself."

"Kept us all out of the way while his confederate ransacked our drawers and boxes. Oh, what fools we have been!"

Well, we wouldn't believe it at first; but when we found that the bill of "the life of the party" had actually been paid with one of Mrs. Lambert's bank notes and that the obliging manager had kindly changed the others into gold for Mr. Harley we were obliged to relinquish our faith.

Yes; that charming Mr. Benson had kept us all entertained downstairs in the evenings, while Mr. Harley fitted keys to our locks; and when all was ready for the "coup," he succeeded in carrying us off for the day, leaving a clear stage (as was becoming) for the famous public singer. When the performance was over, he, too, took his departure, whither I know not; but we were assured by the police it was not to Mentone.

AT THE BAYREUTH FESTIVAL.

"Why, X., what on earth brings you to Bayreuth?" said a musical friend to me as we met, on the Sunday morning after our arrival, in the spacious alley of the Hofgarten, where the band of the First Uhlans was discoursing excellent sweet music to an appreciative concourse of all nations. The question had, or seemed to have, its justification in the fact that, in the technical sense of the word, I am not in the least degree musical, and students or connoisseurs of music are prone to assume that for uncultivated ears such as mine the Wagnerian opera can be naught but vanity and vexation of spirit. Indeed, I am inclined to think that, had they but the power, they would exclude us altogether from their holy ground, as persons unworthy to share the high mysteries of their cult. "Procul o procul este profani," are the words which the true Wagnerian would fain have inscribed on all the approaches to his shrine.

And yet, though I should make but a sorry show in a musical examination, the Bayreuth week is, and will always be to me, one of my most delightful memories, and I venture to hope that a short account of it from my unmusical point of view may not be without its encouragement for others as ignorant as myself.

In the first place, let me remind my readers that though music is the dominant instrument of the Wagnerian drama, it is by no means so dominant as to exclude others from a position of very high importance. The appeal of Italian opera is solely to the ear, and through the ear to the emotions—the appeal of the Wagnerian drama is to the whole man; to the sight no less than to the hearing; to the sense of strong poetic diction no less than to the sense for intricate musical phrasing; to the intellectual and ethical, no less than to the æsthetic faculties. It is the attempt to combine and weave into one glowing and palpitating whole the strongest impulses and the subtlest suggestions of music, and all the sweetness and power of lyric and heroic speech; to clothe the soul thus called into being with all exquisite harmonies of form and colour; to present it with all the melody of graceful and gracious gesture, amid the mighty ebb and flow of rhythmically moving masses; and to set the whole against a background of nature as we see it in its light and shade, in its repose and movement, at those supreme moments when ideal truth and beauty meet, and all the world is pulsating in its utmost arteries to the heartbeats of our own emotion.

In a word, the Wagnerian drama is the attempt to utter the mysteries of life, and not human life alone, but the life of all the animate and inanimate world, in the highest spiritual language known to man—the language of complex orchestral harmony. It is an attempt to achieve something far greater than the ordinary drama alone, or the ordinary opera alone, even pretends to aim at; and just because of this many-sidedness, even the most musically ignorant, if only he bring with him some true sense of poetic feeling, is thrilled and permeated by the mighty effect of the whole—nay, finds that while for the musically learned the music interprets the living, moving pictures of the stage, for him the perfectness of the stage pictures opens the ear to the understanding of the music, and gives him a new sense of that mystic tongue to which hitherto, perchance, he has been as one born deaf.

The themes of "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser," our first two plays at Bayreuth, are too well known to the majority at least of

those who are interested in the Wagnerian drama to justify me in reproducing them. But however often we may have heard them elsewhere, they come to us here with entirely new solemnity and power. From the moment when the last trumpet-peal proclaims the closing of the theatre doors, and the deep "Bayreuth hush" falls upon the vast throng which rises tier upon tier in the darkness of the mighty hall, a sense of awe and mystery creeps into our hearts. The feeling deepens as from the invisible orchestra the first notes of the overture float upwards like some spiritual exhalation, some voice from the innermost heart of things speaking to us in tones which range from the first low lilt of half-awakened birds in the early dawn, to the thunder and crash and reverberant echoes of storm amid the Alpine heights. The invisible music seems indeed as the utterance of our own souls as they pass through all the varied scale of feeling to the moment of confused and agitated expectation when the great curtain parts, and our own agitation and expectancy seem mirrored for us on the stage in the swaying throng of nobles gathered to meet Henry the Fowler beneath the oak of justice in the meadows of fair Brabant. To the musically unlearned I am inclined to think that the greatest wonder and delight of Wagner's orchestration is the strange and subtle manner in which it gives rhythmic voice not only to the passion and feeling of the individual soul, but to the feelings and impulses and even to the physical movements of great masses of men. In ordinary opera the physical movement and orchestration seem to me but accidentally combined. Here I feel them to be the two sides of an organic whole. All through the trying scene of Friedrich of Telramund's accusation, and Elsa's appeal to her unknown champion, there is not a movement of the crowd which fills all the middle distance of the stage—and it is a living, feeling crowd of real men and women that we have before us, not a mere waiting mass of chorus singers—there is not a movement, a stir, a wave of feeling which passes through this crowd, even down to the half-articulate sigh which breaks from it when the third trumpet-blast dies away and no champion appears, which is not taken up and etherealised and consecrated by the invisible music, and set for ever in its right place in the glorious jewel-spangled robe of art which the poet-musician is weaving as it were before our eyes. And when at last, amid the outburst of strong, jubilant harmony, intoxicating as wine, the great mass sweeps forward as an irresistible wave, and, circling round the victorious Lohengrin and his rescued bride, bears them aloft on upraised shields, and the curtain falls on the tumult of their joy, we feel as if we had assisted not at some counterfeit presentment of a tale, but at the unfolding and upgrowing of an actual piece of quivering, palpitating life, interpreted and ennobled by the ideal voice of the most transcendent art.

In "Tannhäuser," side by side with this marvellous interpretation of human life in all the range of its emotions and the intricate complexity of its relations, we have the no less subtle interpretation of the myriad voices in which the Soul of Nature utters itself to our own.

As the mists of the Venusberg clear away, and the fair Thuringian valley unfolds itself, cradled in its beech-woods of tenderest green, and climbing through undulations of smiling meadow and wooded upland to the towers of the distant Wartburg, the very voice of Springtide gladness seems to breathe for us in the piping of the shepherd lad on the crag above the mountain path; the very trees and flowers, and even the moss-grown rocks themselves, to whisper the accompaniment to his song:

Der Mai, der Mai war kommen.

Der Mai ist da, der liebe Mai.

Yet it is characteristic of Wagner that this strain of sweet natural, almost purely physical joy in the warmth and the sunlight, and the new life breaking on the earth, is caught up into and inwoven with the deeper strain of the pilgrims' song, and that that too, the song of awe and mystery, and consciousness of fall and failure lifted out of itself by a larger faith and hope, is felt to be part of the great earth life with which tree and flower and rock are in sympathy, and that so the two, the shepherd's song and the pilgrims' hymn, float into one another and interlace and complete each the other as they linger and fade and die away among the distant pathways of the hills, into the sweet silence of the woodland from which they came, and back to which they go, leaving it the richer for their passing.

As I walked next day under the great limes and chestnuts of the Hofgarten, as I passed from thence to stand by the great musician's grave beneath the whispering beeches, I felt as one in whom a new power had been born of understanding the voices

of the air, and of the sunlight, and of the murmuring trees. All Nature seemed to be whispering to me her secrets in the tongue which none may interpret save for himself, and the peace and joy even amid all the tumult and suffering of life which breathed from that spring scene in "Tannhäuser" rested on my soul like a benediction.

I would fain linger over this play, fain tell of the wondrously natural gathering together of the hunting crowd in the glade, of the audience on the Wartburg, so utterly different in its natural life and movement to the ordinary gathering of a stage crowd, so marvellously defined and accentuated by the chiaroscuro of the orchestration. I would fain attempt to paint in words the change that autumn has made in the Thuringian valley when the curtain parts for the closing act, and the almost incredibly true and beautiful transition from evening to night, and from night to the dawn of the bright new day. I would fain strive to trace the deep harmonies of this changing scene no less with Elisabeth's selfless cry of resignation than with the halleluias of the returning pilgrims and the great message of pardon and peace with which the majestic drama closes, but these things readers in England can in some sort imagine for themselves—and I have left myself but scant space to speak of Bayreuth's special privilege and pride, the "Parsifal," which was the last great work of Wagner's life, and which may not be given elsewhere than amid the surroundings of the Bayreuth Festival.

The story of "Parsifal" is composed of a strange weaving together of ancient legends —the legend of the Grail, the legend of the Holy Spear, the legend of the Round Table, and the legend of the Wandering Jew. "Lohengrin" has already made us familiar with the conception of the brotherhood of Spotless Knights, who in the Castle of Monsalvat guard the sacred treasure of the Grail, the chalice from which the Saviour drank at His last Supper, the chalice which received His blood as He hung upon the cross. We have already seen Lohengrin himself come forth as the knight of the Grail to redress human wrongs, and return to the mystic land from whence he came. In "Parsifal" we are ourselves transported to the domain of Monsalvat, and from the dialogue of the old knight Gurnemanz and his attendants we learn that the knights of the Grail have fallen on evil days. Amfortas, their King, has been beguiled by the arts of the magician Klingsor and the witchery of a woman "fearsome fair" into sin, which has robbed the brotherhood of that Holy Spear which pierced the Saviour's side, and has left Amfortas himself suffering in body from a wound which naught can heal, tortured in soul with unavailing shame and remorse. In vain his knights scour the world for medicine to heal his sickness; in vain does Kundry, the wild woman who serves unbidden as the messenger of the brotherhood, and will take no thanks or praise for her service, bring balm from the depths of Arabia. As Amfortas passes in his litter to bathe in the sacred lake, we realise that he bears with him the double wound which no balm can heal. Naught can avail to restore him but the touch of the Holy Spear, and the spear, alas! is in Klingsor's power. But one hope remains. A voice of comfort has come from the Grail itself, bidding them wait the coming of "the spotless fool, through pity wise," who is the chosen instrument of salvation. Scarce are the words uttered when an angry body of knights and attendants enter, dragging in the boy Parsifal who has polluted the sacred land by killing a wild swan of the lake. The boy, a wild child of nature reared in the woods, is too thoughtless to understand his crime until Gurnemanz appeals to his pity for the dying creature; then with a passionate gesture he flings aside bow and arrows, and pressing his hand over his eyes, bursts into bitter tears. A thrill of hope passes through Gurnemanz's heart and ours, that this guileless fool, whose heart is ready to melt in pity, may be the appointed deliverer: but the deliverance is not yet. In vain does Gurnemanz convey him through pathless ways, symbolised by the slow shifting of the scene, into the Hall of the Grail, and there show him the passionate intensity of Amfortas's suffering, as he, the one sinner, is compelled to act as the minister of the Grail, and to raise the chalice glowing with the light of heaven in benediction over his sinless brethren. Parsifal remains dazed and without understanding, and with an impatient sneer at his folly, Gurnemanz thrusts him forth into the night. It is only when in Klingsor's magic gardens Kundry, the sinner who mocked the Saviour's pain, and is doomed to live till she meets one who can redeem her—Kundry, the penitent messenger of the Grail, compelled by Klingsor to assume the form of a woman "fearsome fair" and do his bidding—tempts him as she tempted Amfortas, that the remembrance of the King's agony comes

to him as a revelation of pity, and steels his heart against the tempter. Henceforth he has proved himself "the spotless fool, through pity wise," and though his recovery of the Holy Spear from Klingsor's now powerless hand is not followed at once by the redemption of Amfortas and Kundry, we know that this redemption will be the culminating point of the play. And so it proves. After long wandering, Parsifal finds once again the land of the Grail. Habited by Gurnemanz in the robes of the order, and anointed King of the brotherhood, he exercises his royal priesthood by pouring the water of baptism on Kundry's head—and then passes with Gurnemanz once more to the Hall of the Grail, where the touch of the Spear brings healing to Amfortas. What words can paint the beauty, the splendour, the awful majesty of that last scene in which Parsifal raises the flashing cup of the Grail over the prostrate mass of worshippers, while from the dome above the dove floats down in a flood of unearthly glory? What language can even dimly shadow forth the exaltation of the throbbing harmonies that surge and swell about his figure until they break at last into a song of triumph, such as only the angels are worthy to understand? It must be seen, it must be heard, or it cannot be believed. And once seen, once heard, it remains in the soul and in the memory for ever—a glory, and a joy, and an inspiration!

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART III.

ALICE stood before her looking-glass, and contemplated her reflection with a countenance puckered by dissatisfaction. "It is bad enough here with three or four candles," she said. "It will be hideous in the glare of the ballroom."

The pink evening dress was pretty and well-fitting, and tolerably modern, and in tolerable repair, and she had once decided it would do. No one would expect her to be in a new dress just before her wedding. But now it struck her altogether in a new light. "It is old-fashioned and dirty," she settled. "I look a fright. Arthur will be ashamed of me. I don't care what Aunt Robina says. I will put on the white."

She had not much time to effect the transformation, for Miss Downing called presently: "Alice, make haste. The man has two more houses to call at."

So, of course, there was no time to send her upstairs to change again when she appeared before her horrified aunt in all the glory of her very best new ball-dress; a lovely combination of silk, lace, and chiffon, all of purest white.

"I really wonder you didn't put on your wedding-dress when you were about it," said Miss Downing.

"It has to go back. It doesn't quite fit," said Alice carelessly. She was radiant with joy in her beauty, and hope of its triumph. She would not have acknowledged why she was so anxious to appear very fair to-night; what conquest she had in view. She was not jealous; she trusted fully in Arthur's love. She would have scorned any suggestion that, under any circumstances, he could have admired Miss Boyd more than herself. But she remembered how the enemy had once found her at her worst and weakest, and routed her; and she was determined on meeting her to-night armed at all points. In one point, indeed, she fell provokingly short: she had no flowers. Arthur had written to Covent Garden for a bouquet, but it had not arrived. The flowers might have freshened the old dress up, at any rate, sufficiently to win approbation from a man's eyes. Arthur was but a man and susceptible to feminine dress effects, and she was but a woman, and suffered from shabby and unbecoming clothing in spite of her youth and prettiness. As for caring about ill-luck—why, the only way ill-luck could be brought about would be by looking less pretty and bright than other girls.

The ball was given by Lady Strange in honour of her only daughter's coming of age, so it was a point of courtesy to attend it, besides giving an opportunity of meeting Arthur. He was waiting for them when they arrived, looking rather worn and fagged, but with Alice's carnations in his button-hole. He had been very nice these last ten days. He had been working hard at Kilmeny, but not too hard, until quite lately, to give many happy hours to his betrothed. To-day she had not seen him until now, as he expected by dint of close work to finish Kilmeny by the end of the week, and pack her off to the winter exhibition for which she was destined.

"I am so sorry," said Alice immediately. "The flowers have not come."

"Flowers? Oh, yes—I remember. I sent them to you," he answered, brightening after a puzzled pause. "The people addressed them to me, and I sent Thomas on

with them to you, as I was desperately busy in the agonies of finishing."

"Finishing? Is Kilmeny finished?"

"Finished and despatched—an enormous weight off my mind. And now I can give the whole of it to my dearest, and enjoy this evening with her, and all the next twelve days."

"Arthur, why did you send the picture away without telling me?" she asked. "You know how awfully I wanted to see her."

"Darling, how awfully stupid of me!" he cried, in sincere penitence. "I never thought. I could think of nothing but the picture. A sort of divine fury possessed me, swallowed me up, or I could not have finished her so soon. It was as if my mind and fingers worked on of themselves—rushed ahead of me. I can neither eat nor think when these waves of inspiration come over me."

"Is it not very bad for you, dear? You will have brain fever if you go on; you looked so white and harassed just now at the door."

"It would be bad if it lasted for ever," he said cheerfully, "but it doesn't—only for occasional days or hours, and I must seize every moment while it lasts. Then I take long rests between—perfect rests. I shall do nothing now until after our honeymoon."

Alice looked at him admiringly, not anxiously. Colour had come back to his face, and peace to his eyes. He looked so handsome, so refined and high-souled in his rather delicate beauty, so far beyond all the other men in the room. How much grander it was to be loved by a real artist, visited by these divine floods of inspiration, than by a man who was always level-spirited, and of the earth earthy. She might be level herself, but she admired nothing less in men. Of course her own level sense was just what Arthur required to keep him balanced and anchored to earth. It would never do if he were to be carried away to some third heaven and stay there. But she was very sorry he had forgotten how much she would have liked to see the perfect Kilmeny, though of course it was delightful to know that it was off his mind so much sooner than he had expected, and that she could have his undivided attention for these last days of loverhood.

It was a great old castle they had come to, with miles of stair and corridor, and acres of reception room. Miss Downing walked up the wide staircase before them while this conversation went on. Lady Strange; her son, Sir Hugh; and her daughter, Agatha; awaited their guests at a door opening upon the gallery. The rooms were a blaze of light, and crowded by gaily dressed women and men, a good many of whom were in hunt dress or uniform. Agatha Strange was greatly distinguished in the hunting field, and had requested that her ball should be a sort of Hunt ball, which heightened the picturesque effect. Dick Freeland, in the scarlet and black of the Pyncholk Hunt, greeted Alice while they were waiting until arrivals in front had been received by the hostess.

"Thank you so much for the lovely flowers, Mr. Knollys," said a voice close behind them.

Alice turned, astonished, from Mr. Freeland's courtesies. There stood Miss Boyd, blazing in scarlet and diamonds, holding in her hands the very shower-bouquet of white roses which Alice had been waiting for all that weary afternoon: white roses mixed with pink carnations to match her pink dress, and which did not "go" at all with scarlet satin.

She looked quickly at Arthur. Her amazement was almost nothing to his apparent confusion, which of course must be due to the inconvenient betrayal of his faithlessness in the presence of the rightful owner of the flowers and of his attentions.

"I—I am afraid," he stammered, but just then Lady Strange shook hands with Miss Downing, and was looking for the rest of her party, and Alice was compelled to pass on. She had dropped Arthur's arm, but he followed her to shake hands with Lady Strange. He had simply followed for explanation, regardless of Miss Boyd's feelings and opinion of his manners.

"I never sent her the flowers," he muttered in Alice's ears. "They have been sent to her by mistake. It is awfully awkward. I cannot take them from her and give them to you."

"Mr. Knollys," said the hateful voice again, "I hope there was no mistake about the flowers. They were addressed to you at the 'Red Lion,' and readdressed, I supposed, by you to me. Had it been a verbal message, there might have been a mistake. Of course, I do not know your handwriting. The man left them with your compliments, and said you were sorry you were too busy to bring them yourself."

Poor Arthur was nearly crazy between annoyance with the woman for making a scene, misery at the anger in Alice's face,

and rage at the amusement in Dick Freeland's; all the muddle increased by the impossibility of explaining the matter in a way to save everybody's feelings all round.

"Perhaps these flowers belong to you, Miss à Court," said Lydia Boyd, holding them out.

"Oh, no," and "Please keep them," said Alice and Arthur simultaneously, dreading to attract further listeners. Then Alice walked off with Dick Freeland, and left Arthur to make the best he could of the situation.

She danced with Dick almost unconsciously. She was engaged for that dance to Arthur, and Dick had not asked her They joined the dancers simply to get out of a disagreeable imbroglio. When it was over, Alice asked Dick to take her back to her aunt. She didn't want refreshment. She wanted to go home, if Miss Downing would allow it.

Miss Downing was sitting with Mrs. Waterton on a red sofa against the wall. As soon as Alice saw that, she shrank back and said: "Not there, please. The other way."

Dick was not a very brilliant young man, but he could not help understanding, having heard the whole incident. Neither was he usually supposed to be blessed with tact. But he had a very kind heart, which does, as a rule, much better.

"Awkward business, that about the flowers," he said, laughing. "His servant's mistake, of course, and poor Knollys suffers. I don't envy him trying to flounder out of it. It must be uncommonly disagreeable to have to tell a girl he had never dreamt of sending her the flowers she is so pleased with. Almost as bad as stories you hear of a man proposing to a girl for her sister, and being accepted by the first girl by mistake."

Alice laughed. Of course, that must be the explanation. Miss Boyd should have read the address more carefully. She wished she could see Arthur to hear how he had got out of it. He would, no doubt, be seeking her for the next dance, having missed his own.

"Can you give me another dance?" asked Dick. "The next? You are engaged for this one, I believe."

Alice looked at her card. It was, of course, perfectly blank as yet. She had promised "all the waltzes and galops but three" to Arthur, and began to mark them off. Programmes in the country are not made entirely of round dances, so even that liberal promise left a good many to spare.

"You can have the next Kitchen Lancers," she said, "and waltz ten."

"May I have this waltz, Miss à Court?" asked another youth.

Alice was on the point of repeating that she was engaged, having marked that waltz off, when she saw Arthur and Miss Boyd crossing the room together. She placed her hand abruptly on his arm, forgetting even to bow dismissal to Dick, and disregarding his expostulatory, "Why, you said——" she walked off with her new cavalier, and made six engagements on the way to the circle of dancers.

The last bars were hardly played out when Arthur touched her arm.

"You will dance the next with me, Alice. Come and have an ice."

"Thanks, Mr. Wynne will get me one. I am engaged for the next," she said coolly.

It was quite easy to do it with Harry Wynne for an audience.

"The one after, then?"

"I have nothing until nine," she said.

"Nine is a quadrille. Give me ten."

"I am engaged for ten and eleven. You can have twelve."

"I will have nine. We need not dance it."

She wrote his name down as carefully as if she might forget it. A little cross did duty for him all down the card if he had known, though in eight places it was almost obliterated by other people's names. Then she turned with a smile to her partner, and suggested that the room was very hot.

Arthur stood back in the crowd, and watched her silently. What could she mean by such conduct? She could not really believe that it was his fault that Miss Boyd had come by the flowers. It was preposterous that she should treat him so; keep him waiting until number nine—a quadrille! He was glad it would be a quadrille. There would be time to get things put straight in some sheltered nook while the quadrille was going on; but it was a far cry to number nine.

He did not ask any one else to dance. He knew very few of the people. He propped himself against a doorpost, and absently watched the crowd while he thought over the foolish little quarrel. He was wedged into his place by the people, as they passed between the rooms; truly "alone in a crowd," for not a creature who knew him was near in sight. He could muse to his heart's content on the vanity of life as it passed before his eyes. He was really

almost asleep on his feet. He was quite worn out with the labour, and confinement, and excitement of finishing his picture. He had worked almost without breathing space every hour of the last four days, as days are counted by the sun. His sleep had been his work done over and over again; only for the waking joy of success, of delight in progress, of eager hope, there was despair. He could never finish the picture. Kilmeny kept evading him. The face would come out under his hand anybody's but Kilmeny's. Sometimes Miss Downing's; sometimes that of one of his London models; sometimes a face out of somebody else's picture. Millais's Jersey Lily, Mrs. Hammersley, Watts's Hope, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth; very often Miss Boyd's, with strange differences; never the ideal Kilmeny's, and never Alice's. So morning found him unrested, but feverishly awake and eager for work. And now it was done, and he wanted to enjoy himself—and here was Alice spoiling all his well-earned holiday by pretending to believe he could have sent her flowers to Miss Boyd!

Suddenly he was aroused from his semi-somnolence by hearing her name.

"How beautiful Alice à Court looks to-night; quite bridal in that lovely dress; and so very happy!"

He looked round at once to seek her. If she looked so happy she could not be very angry with him.

She went past at a little distance with Dick Freeland. Their dance was just over. Chance had cleared a space beside them, and for the moment Arthur could see her white figure at full length. She was laughing at something Dick was saying. She looked radiantly beautiful. Arthur allowed none of it to the credit of the smartest gown she had ever worn in her life. Manlike, he had not the least idea what her dress was, except that it was "something white." He only recognised the effect; and, tired as he was, a perfect storm of passionate longing seized him to snatch her from Freeland, from all the world, and take her to himself alone. What business was her beauty of any other man? She was his; it was his. He could not bear that they should rob him of so much as could fill the eye.

Another voice spoke; one that was familiar; sharp and elderly:

"Yes, she looks very well to-night. She was quite beat on coming. Poor thing, she wanted to have one more happy night, she said, before she settled down to marriage."

Arthur could have sprung forward in wrath, had he been able to move a limb. His back being against the doorpost, there was a compact mass of black-coated humanity before him, forced back by the pressure of dancers passing to the refreshment room. He could not even indicate his presence to the speakers, who were keeping out of the draught behind the doorpost and looped-back curtain.

"But she is quite happy in her engagement?" said the other voice interrogatively. He did not quite recognise it at first.

"I suppose so, poor child," said Miss Downing compassionately. "Of course I should have preferred Mr. Freeland for her. She would be much happier in a country life, and artists are so unreliable—not only in their means but in their temper."

This really was very hard to bear. Truly listeners never hear good of themselves. Arthur believed himself to be such a good-tempered fellow.

"There are many things to put up with in the artistic temperament besides temper," said Mrs. Waterton. "It is well that Alice is so good-tempered. Many girls would have been very angry indeed with a lover who sent a bouquet to another girl."

"But of course that was a mistake," said Miss Downing with dignity, though she knew nothing of the matter but what she had half overheard on the stairs. "The flowers were really ordered for Alice."

"I saw the box come," said Mrs. Waterton. "It was readdressed to Miss Boyd, or I should not have taken it in. I suppose he must have ordered two bouquets, and only one turned up from the florist's. It was tiresome, of course, and most unpleasant for poor Lydia."

"Why on earth should he order flowers for Miss Boyd whom he barely knows?"

"I don't know about barely knowing. They were a whole afternoon together on Tuesday week, pretending to pose for pictures in the old schoolroom—to get a north light, they said. I don't know when he would have torn himself away if I hadn't had to give him a hint. We had people coming to dinner, and I couldn't ask him to stay, as he would have thrown my couples wrong."

"It is all a matter of business with him," said Miss Downing frigidly. "You haven't told me yet how your new cook answers for a big dinner?"

Here opportunity came to move out of durance. What a wicked old woman! What a tissue of fabrications! What if Miss Downing, who did not want him to

marry Alice, should repeat them, too, in hope of breaking off their engagement? Alice, too, had recently developed a quite unexpected capacity for jealousy. Well, he would be jealous too, and with very much better reason. What did she mean by dancing off with Freeland and all those other fellows, and throwing all his promised waltzes over? Then, blessed sound! he heard somebody mention supper, and observed a distinct movement in a new direction. Alice was engaged to go in to supper with him; an engagement that took precedence of all others. He must find her at once. He set off on that quest, crossing the ballroom to his right. At the same moment, Miss Downing, behind the portière on his left, turned to look for some chance squire to take her to supper, and beheld Alice standing quite alone, and looking pale and scared. "She has heard!" thought her aunt in consternation.

"What are you doing there? Why are you alone?" she asked sharply.

"Mr. Freeland had to take a married lady to supper, so of course he brought me to you," she said nervously. "Let us go home; I am so tired."

"Home already!" cried Aunt Robina, who wanted her supper badly. "I should think not. Where is Arthur? Why are you not going in with him?"

"I think I see him over there with Lydia," said Mrs. Waterton, peering through her long eyeglass. "That is her scarlet dress, I am quite sure."

It never entered Alice's head that he might be asking Miss Boyd if she had met Miss à Court anywhere. She was sure he must be asking her to go in to supper. Had he not danced with her first of all, besides sending her the flowers?

"Miss à Court, may I have the pleasure of taking you to supper—if you are not engaged?"

The hesitation was too exasperatingly significant.

"Oh dear, no, I am not," said Alice, stung into a certainty she had not really felt after all.

Miss Downing started, and Mrs. Waterton stared, while Alice walked off with a young Sandys.

"She does not care to give all the evening to Arthur," said Miss Downing unconvincingly. "She will have enough of him soon, for the rest of her life. She dislikes being set on the shelf as an engaged girl."

Alice could not eat much supper, all her senses being strained to see or hear Arthur with Miss Boyd, but they did not come into the room. She felt as if she were in a dream. Nothing had been so real in life as her engagement, and now it seemed to have vanished into thin air. She had lost Arthur; Lydia Boyd had stolen him from her. She was too much crushed by the stern weight of evidence to resist it. It made up a quite irresistible amount of fact. She did not think of appealing against it, much less to ask for explanation of what seemed all too plain. She could only think one thought. she was no longer the girl engaged to Arthur Knollys, and going to be married in three weeks' time. She was somebody quite different.

Supper seemed to last an interminable time, but it did come to an end. She felt strange and giddy when she rose to her feet. Young Sandys looked at her with concern.

"You are not well," he said. "You really should have eaten something, you had nothing at all. Let me give you a glass of wine."

"No, take me into the air," she gasped.

He made her drink some water, and then took her out upon a terrace. It was too cold. She shivered, and said she had better go home. Would he take her to the cloak-room, and tell her aunt?

He accomplished the first task, but not the second. Miss Downing was at supper. He did not find himself able to return and tell Alice, who had much better come back to the ballroom when she was rested. He had engagements of his own to attend to.

Alice sat by the cloak-room fire very comfortably and peacefully. Nobody was there but a maid. It was so nice and quiet after the crowded rooms. She lay back in a deep chair, too tired to think actively, almost enjoying the giving up of herself to the utter weakness that follows severe agony.

She had sat there quite a long time when a girl rushed in to have her dress mended.

"Please be quick," she said breathlessly. "I am engaged for this—number nine."

Instantly Alice became vividly alive. She, too, was engaged for number nine. Everything became of no importance whatever beside that immense fact. She must manage to slip back to the rooms alone. How should she?

Just outside the door she met her young host, who asked her to dance.

"I am engaged," she said, "but if you would be so kind as take me in——"

He took her in readily, found her a seat, and waited by her side till her partner should claim her. They were quite a conspicuous couple, the only stationary people there. Every one else, reinvigorated by supper, was hurrying to form the quadrilles. Arthur was nowhere to be seen.

"He must be at supper," said Sir Hugh Strange. "We might as well have danced it, but it is too late now. I was engaged to a lady who has gone home. It is much nicer sitting out, though."

"Yes, it is too late. But it is not nice sitting here," she said. "Cannot we go somewhere else?"

"Oh, yes, there are plenty of places. Have you been through the conservatories? They are very pretty just now. Do come. You like flowers, I know."

She went with him through high banks and under groves of tropical blooms and foliage; a paradise of heavy perfume, damp warmth, and softly shaded lamps. Fountains tinkled unseen under ferns and feathery groves, and sparkled among palms and brilliant dropping creepers. In the distance the dance music went on, a soft, measured hum. There were several couples besides themselves in the greenhouses, which were many and spacious. The music died away. Then the couples hurried out to make and keep other engagements. Alice was engaged to Dick Freeland for number ten, but she had forgotten. She had no longer any lot or share in those joyous frivolities. She felt herself set apart for ever by pain from all that belonged to light and youth.

"We are left quite alone," hinted her companion, who wanted to dance.

"No. There are still some people." She stopped.

The people were in a small conservatory, a mere grove of foliage round a fountain and a seat. Upon the seat were two figures: a lady in scarlet, and a man beside her, looking into her eyes as if he had forgotten all the world beyond them—and such a small thing as his engagement to dance number nine with the rest of it.

"I am afraid we are intruding," said Alice, with a harsh little laugh; "and I am engaged for this dance. We must hurry up."

They met Miss Downing coming from the supper-room. Alice dismissed her escort, and drew her aunt aside.

"I cannot stay another minute. Come home at once. I will tell you why, after. If you don't come now, I will run home all by myself in the dark."

Miss Downing's hard heart could not but be touched with dismay and compassion at that pleading white face, and she had had her supper, and was full of curiosity, and terribly afraid of revelations in public. So she consented to be torn prematurely from the gay and festive throng.

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

Bilious & Nervous Disorders,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,

Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,

Disordered Liver, & Female Ailments.

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.
The 1s. 1½d. Box contains Fifty-six Pills.

The SALE is now SIX MILLION BOXES Per Annum.

Prepared only by the Proprietor—

THOMAS BEECHAM, ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS AND PATENT MEDICINE DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

Towle's Pennyroyal and Steel Pills FOR FEMALES

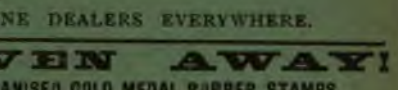
Quickly correct all irregularities, remove all obstructions, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex.

Boxes, **1/1½** & **2/9** (the latter size contains three times the quantity), of all Chemists, or will be sent anywhere on receipt of **15** or **34** stamps by the maker, E. T. TOWLE, Chemist, NOTTINGHAM.

Beware of Imitations injurious and worthless

GIVEN AWAY!

REVULCANISED GOLD MEDAL RUBBER STAMPS.



Your Name, your Monogram, bottle of Endorsing Ink, two Pads, Box, and Brush for **9d.**, post free; with Marking Ink or Pencil, **1/3**. Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, **6d.** Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, **9d.** Watch Case, beautifully chased, with Name and Address Stamp, **1s.**; and every other description of Rubber Stamp half-price. Send for List. Agents wanted. Address to



Crystal Palace (John Bond's Daughter's) Gold Medal Marking Ink Works, 75, Southgate Road, London, N.

CAUTION.—The Original and Genuine Ink Label has the trade mark, "CRYSTAL PALACE."

EXQUISITE MODELS. PERFECT FIT. GUARANTEED WEAR.



THE Y & N PATENT DIAGONAL SEAM CORSETS

Patented in England and on the Continent.

Will not split in the Seams nor tear in the Fabric.

Made in White, Black, and all the fashionable colours and shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil. Also in the New Sanitary Woollen Cloth.

4/11, 5/11, 6/11, 7/11

PER PAIR, AND UPWARDS.

Three Gold Medals. "Exquisitely modelled, exquisitely neat and strong."—*Queen.*

Caution.—Beware of worthless imitations. Every genuine Y & N Corset is stamped.

Sold by the principal Drapers and Ladies' Outfitters.

JEWSBURY & BROWN'S

ORIGINAL & ONLY GENUINE

Oriental

CLIMATE PROOF **Tooth** SIXTY YEARS IN USE.

CAUTION.
THE GENUINE ONLY IS SIGNED
JEWSBURY & BROWN.

Paste

All Perfumers and Chemists. 1/6 & 2/6 Pots.

Crosse & Blackwell

PURE MALT VINEGAR

In imperial pint and quart bottles,

IS SOLD BY ALL GROCERS AND ITALIAN WAREHOUSE

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, Limited, Soho Square, LON

SULPHOLINE LOTION

SHILLING BOTTLES.

A Spotless Skin. A Beautiful Complexion.

PEPPER'S QUININE AND TONIC

2s. 6d. Bottles. Sold Everywhere

GIVES
Great Bodily Strength
Great Nerve Strength!
Great Mental Strength!
Great Digestive Strength!

Promotes Appetite. Cures Dyspepsia, Nervous Complaints, General De

LIEBIG "COMPANY'S" EXTRACT OF BEEF

Is the finest Meat flavouring Stock for Soups, Sauces, Made Dishes, &c.

J. Liebig

Genuine only with
Blue Signature
across the Label.

Sole Manufactory: FRAY BENTOS, S. AMERICA. Cookery Books (indispensable to Ladies) **Post Free** on application to

LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT CO. Ltd., 9, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.

F. M. EVANS & Co., LIMITED, CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

ORWICK'S BAKING POWDER. The best that money can buy.

RIDGWAYS' TEAS. PERFECTION OF QUALITY & VALUE. KING WILLIAM ST., CITY, & BRANCHES. Also AGENCIES IN MOST LARGE TOWNS.

Third Series

OCTOBER, 1894.

CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED September 8, 15, 22, & 29.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 69.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Prisoners of Silence. A Serial Story 217, 241, 265, 289	
The City of the Nizam ...	222
At the End of the World. A Complete Story	228
Ulster Singing Schools ...	233
Military and other Medals ...	246
Memories of a Cheshire Moor	250
After Rain. A Poem	254
"All's Well." A Complete Story	254
The British Standing Army...	270
Bewitched. A Story in Eight Parts 236, 260, 283, 307	
Moon Myths	276
"The Life of the Party." A Complete Story	276
At the Bayreuth Festival ...	280
Holiday Moods	293
Whaling in the Antarctic ...	296
Women as Dramatists ...	299
The Captain's Conviction. A Complete Story	301

ALSO THE EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER.

Price FIFTEENPENCE.

1894.

LONDON

12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C.

Nos. 297 to 300

ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS.

John Noble, Ltd., the pioneers of the Revolution in Dress-making, are now supplying

A LADY'S HOLIDAY SUIT for 15/-

Made in the John Noble Cheviot Serge (Navy Blue or Black); also in Grey or Drab Homespun Mixtures, and in Navy or Drab Twill Drill. Each suit consists of fashionable Open Coat and improved Bell Skirt, both finished with special quality Silk Cord.

Packed in box and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

THE JOHN NOBLE HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES, consisting of wide Bell Skirt and fashionable Blouse Bodice, trimmed Russia Braid, are supplied in the John Noble Cheviot Serge or Brown Linen Holland for 10/6 complete. Carriage 9d. extra. **10/6**

KNOCKABOUT FROCKS for GIRLS.

Lengths	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45 inches.
Price	1/6	2/-	2/6	3/-	3/6	4/-	4/6	5/-	5/6 each.

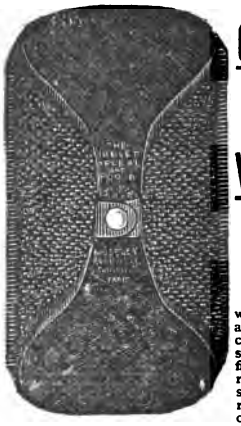
Postage 4½d. extra. Lengths stated are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt.

Write for Patterns and Illustrated "Book of the Serge," sent Post Free by

JOHN NOBLE, LTD., The Warehouse, 11, Piccadilly, **MANCHESTER.**

BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH AND WASHING GLOVE.



Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion. Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED **Rubber Bath and Flesh Brushes,** price **5s.** each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON;

Ardwick, Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BOILING WATER OR MILK.

A BOON TO LADIES.

COLLINS' MARVELLOUS FEMALE REMEDY.

Mr. COLLINS (who was 30 years a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England) will forward, free of Charge, full PARTICULARS of a REMEDY, which during an extensive practice, both at home and in the Colonies, he has never known to fail in the most OBSTINATE CASES of OBSTRUCTION and IRREGULARITIES. Send addressed envelope for full particulars, and waste no more time and money on useless Pills and so-called Remedies, etc., which, in the majority of cases, are nothing but PURGATIVES, and cause SICKNESS, PROSTRATION, and PAIN, without having the desired effect. Letters to be addressed:

D. COLLINS,
Gothic House, 9, Erskine Street,
Liverpool.

NO HOME COMPLETE OR SAFE WITHOUT.

Slung in all W.C. flush cisterns.

THE NEW DEODORISER.

Scentless, harmless, universal, perfect.

6d. "CONDITAS" 6d.

Free by Post. (A POWDER.) *Free by Post.*

PURIFIES tainted air, water, fish, meat, game, butter, poultry, cisterns, closets, drains, sewers, utensils, plants, animals, birds; grand for bath, toilet, mouth-wash, gargle, and breath drink. Perfect hygiene at last for everybody all the year round automatically washing and purifying.

Of all Stationers and Ironmongers.

163, BATTERSEA RISE, LONDON.

LOVELY HAIR.

Dr. HORN'S "AOESMA" quickly restores the colour to grey, faded, or bleached hair. Does not stain the skin. **2/9** and **5/-** per bottle, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "GERMANIA HAIR TONIC" for thin or falling hair. Promotes luxuriant growth. Very cleansing. Non-greasy. **2/9** and **5/-**, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "HAIR SOLVENT." A liquid for destroying superfluous hair. Leaves no mark. Better than Electrolysis. **2/9** and **5/-** per bottle, post free.

Dr. HORN'S SKIN FOOD for the COMPLEXION. A cure for wrinkles, roughness, irritation, and all blemishes of the skin. Price **2/9**, **5/-**, and **10/-**, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "AREATA LOTION" for Bald Patches. Cases of six and eight years' baldness successfully treated. **2/9** and **5/-**, post free of Chemists and Perfumers, or of Sole Manufacturers,

Cassie & Co., Chemists, **49, Newgate St., E.C**

Read Dr. Horn's Treatise, "The Human Hair," post free, **6d.**



Hair 5 feet 2 inches long.

Don't Cough—just use

They at once check the cough and remove the cause—without any after effect.

The Unrivalled Remedy

One gives relief they *will* cure, and they *will not* injure your health.

Keating's Lozenges

SOLD IN TINS 1s. 1½ EACH

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 300.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was an unwritten canon among the subordinate members of Dr. Vallotson's household that the mistress of the house always looked very well "when she was dressed." The substantially handsome garments which she was wont to don when she visited were, in particular, considered by her kitchen critics to "set her off" with conspicuous effect; and the parlour-maid, who had, of course, considerable opportunities of forming an opinion, and who was moreover a native of Alnchester, was in the habit of clinching her approving comments with the assertion that there was no lady in the town, or in the precincts either, who "dressed handsomer."

Both the parlour maid in question and the coachman felt themselves established afresh in both these opinions as Mrs. Vallotson, who had come downstairs punctually at half-past three, went out to the brougham that afternoon. The woman saw at one glance that her mistress had "all her best things on." The man privately reiterated his conviction that she was "a wonderful fine figure of a woman, with a precious sight more stuff in her than any of the young ones!" So impressed was he by the characteristic in his mistress which he thus vaguely defined, that he could not refrain from an appreciative look at her as she stood some half an hour later before the door of Hatherleigh Grange.

As a matter of course, the Alnchester shops, exclusively, were patronised by the doctor's wife, and her patronage was considered a very desirable honour. It was well understood that nothing but the very best would do for Mrs. Vallotson; the term comprehending all that was most thoroughly genuine in material, all that was most substantial and imposing in cut and decoration, and ignoring utterly such trifles as taste and new fashion. Her tall figure, clad, now, on these lines, in what their vendor had characterised as "excessively handsome" winter garments, no longer showed gaunt. It was drawn up to its full height, and there was a suggestion of force about its vigorous outlines which seemed to invest her with a singular dignity, not of repose or breeding, but of innate, self-conscious power. Her lips were slightly compressed, and her eyes glittered.

"Is Lady Karslake at home?"

"Yes, madam."

It struck the man that the question had been asked with a peremptoriness which hardly beseemed a visitor who obviously possessed no footman, but he led the way across the hall with the impassiveness of a machine.

"What name, madam?"

The answer rang as peremptorily as her question had done:

"Mrs. Vallotson."

The next moment a door was flung open, and the name was repeated with that absolute inexpressiveness of which perhaps only a footman is capable.

It was a large room, warmed by two bright fires at opposite ends, and lighted by three long windows which faced the door and looked out over gardens and a park. It was one of those rooms which are so large that the furniture is necessarily so disposed that each separate arrangement of chairs, sofas, and tables is complete in itself; and

which only the most perfect taste can preserve from either over-crowding and over-decoration, or an alternative bareness. In this instance an absolutely harmonious result had been obtained. No aggressively distinct impression, either as to colour or style, was conveyed. There were quantities of flowers and ferns about, but even these were not obtrusive, and were rather noticeable in the general effect produced than in detail. The room had only one occupant. About the fireplace at the end of the room farthest from the door, there was a peculiarly comfortable and dainty little arrangement of furniture, backed by a beautiful screen. In a large, low chair thus protected, leaning idly back with a book on her knee, was Lady Karslake.

She turned her head quickly as the footman spoke, and rose with a graceful impulsive movement, moving a few steps forward—a slender, delicately-dressed figure—to receive her visitor. There was a little smile of half-amused curiosity coming and going in her eyes, and it changed into an almost mischievous flash of perception and anticipation as she held out her hand.

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance!" she said; she spoke with a cordiality of manner which sat delightfully upon her. "It is very kind of you to come and see me, Mrs. Vallotson!"

For an instant there was a very singular and perfectly perceptible pause. Mrs. Vallotson had taken the hand held out to hers, and she was still holding it—mechanically, as it seemed—as she looked straight into her hostess's face. There was so strange an expression in her eyes—could Lady Karslake have seen it in the gathering dusk—so full, piercing, and assured was their gaze; that for that instant, even confronted with the easy dignity of the woman whose hand she held, the rough power with which the doctor's wife was instinct asserted itself as absolute haughtiness, and she and her hostess stood on an equality.

The next moment Mrs. Vallotson had dropped Lady Karslake's hand, and dropped it brusquely.

"I am very happy to call," she said.

"You must have found it cold driving?" said Lady Karslake. "Will you take this chair—near the fire? How bright it has been, though!"

"It is hardly colder than we must expect at this time of year," responded Mrs. Vallotson tersely.

She had taken the chair indicated by her hostess, and was sitting erect and uncompromising. Her dignity was about her still, but compared with the manner and bearing of her hostess it showed now chill and stiff.

Lady Karslake smiled and accepted the response with a careless, courteous gesture. The servants were bringing in lamps, and she was sitting in a flood of soft pinkish light as she scanned her visitor's face with a half delighted shrewdness in her own. She did not pursue the subject of the weather.

"It is a very pretty drive from Alnchester in the summer, they tell me," she observed. "You know it well, of course? You must be very fond of Alnchester, Mrs. Vallotson, I am sure."

"I do not know that I have ever thought about it. It is a pleasant place to live in, and I am accustomed to it. That is the principal thing, in my opinion."

The friendly cordiality of Lady Karslake's tone had produced not the faintest perceptible effect on Mrs. Vallotson's demeanour, and the tiniest flash of expression contracted her hostess's eyebrows. The footman had placed a little tea-table by her side, and she turned and began to pour out tea with quick, deft movements.

"You have lived here a great many years, I think?" she said. "Dr. Branston—you will let me give you some tea?"

She had half risen with a cup in her hand, and Mrs. Vallotson stopped her abruptly.

"None, thank you!" she said decidedly.

Lady Karslake sat down again with a little laugh; there was rather a wilful ring in it.

"None?" she said. "How sad! Afternoon tea seems to me the one thing that makes life in the country endurable. It breaks up the afternoon. I tell my husband that he only lives for tea-time. He always comes in for a cup."

"Indeed!"

The word was polite, but it was icy; and Lady Karslake, glancing across at her visitor's immoveable face, leaned back in her chair.

"I was just going to say something about Dr. Branston!" she said. "I can't remember what it was, but I should very much like to tell you, if I may, how much my husband has appreciated his skill and care during his illness. We can never forget how much we owe to him."

The words were very perfectly spoken, with a gracious wifely dignity which made them indescribably charming. But not a

muscle of Mrs. Vallotson's face moved. Her colour seemed to have faded slightly as she answered, in the same inexpressive voice:

"I believe he is considered clever. I am glad you have been satisfied."

With a graceful movement as of impatience or annoyance, Lady Karslake lifted herself from her easy attitude. Then, as though to cover the movement, she rose and said with a little laugh:

"They can't have told my husband. I will ring. It will give him great pleasure——"

She was interrupted. With a sharp movement, evidently as involuntary as the gesture with which she stretched out one hand as if to command silence, Mrs. Vallotson had turned her head.

"That's North's voice," she said.

There was a sound of voices outside as she stopped with a strange, breathless catch in her voice—and she half rose from her seat.

Lady Karslake glanced down at her with a flash of surprise.

"How quick of you!" she said. "Yes, it does sound like Dr. Branston, doesn't it? I suppose he has been to see my husband, and is coming in to have some tea."

The voices came nearer as she spoke, a touch fell on the handle of the door, and Mrs. Vallotson sat slowly down again on her chair; slowly and stiffly like a woman made of stone.

"Have you come for a cup of tea, Dr. Branston?" said Lady Karslake as the door opened. She held out her hand to North Branston as he came across the room to her, with an easy cordiality of greeting which witnessed, as did the tone of her voice, to the intercourse of the past weeks. "I have a visitor, you see. William," she added, "I want to introduce you to Mrs. Vallotson."

Sir William Karslake had followed North Branston into the room. Even when weighted by the heavy disabilities of weakness and pain, his conspicuous personal advantages and his dignity of manner had been by no means overlaid; seen now in comparative health, he was a singularly striking-looking man. He was a tall man, as has been said, but it was not from his height that his presence derived its dignity. There was about him that air of perfect breeding which is in part an affair of birth, in part of the circumstances of life; and it was coupled with that which gives it a supreme charm—a suggestion of mental power, and of the habit of command. Sir William Karslake had made a great success of life. He stood at the head of his own line in the diplomatic service, and he had been for many years one of the most courted men in the Indian Empire. Socially, also, the ball of life had been at his feet. And there were characteristics about his face which suggested that in the latter case, as in the former, his dominance had been the result of deliberate calculation. His features were admirable, and life had impressed upon them that charm of stateliness which makes a man handsomer in middle age than youth can ever be; but there were lines about it faintly suggestive of sarcastic possibilities, and his eyes were cold and expressionless. Neither in his step nor in his carriage were there any traces of the invalid, but his illness had left its mark on him nevertheless. His features were almost painfully sharply chiselled, and there were deep hollows about his eyes.

He quickened his steps slightly, on Lady Karslake's words, with a courteous gesture of satisfaction, and came up to where Mrs. Vallotson sat.

"May I have the pleasure of introducing my husband, Mrs. Vallotson?"

There was the faintest touch of surprise in Lady Karslake's voice. Mrs. Vallotson had neither moved nor spoken as Sir William Karslake approached her. As Lady Karslake, however, spoke she rose slowly. Her figure was drawn up to its full height; her head was lifted and slightly thrown back; and her eyes were almost on a level with those of the man before her as she looked full into his face and held out her hand.

"I am very happy!" she said.

Sir William Karslake had taken her hand, and bowed over it in the courtly manner which was habitual with him. Then he looked in due course into her face. There was no pause, even of the most imperceptible nature, before he spoke; not a muscle of his face seemed to have moved; and yet in that brief second his eyes had altered slightly. An intent expression had developed in them, as of a clear-headed man who finds himself suddenly disturbed by a shadowy association of ideas too dim and too fleeting to be either accurately defined or traced to any source.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity!" he said. "Branston"—this over his shoulder to North in the same suave, well-modulated tone—"why did you not tell us

that we were to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Vallotson?"

"I am not a seer, unfortunately," returned North. The surprise with which he had acknowledged Mrs. Vallotson's presence had vanished, and he smiled grimly as he spoke. "I could not tell you what I did not know myself."

"You'll have some tea, Dr. Branston?"

North turned to Lady Karslake, who had seated herself again by the tea-table, and took a low chair near her.

"Thanks," he said. "I will."

At the same moment Sir William Karslake seated himself by Mrs. Vallotson.

"I am a great admirer of your fine old city, Mrs. Vallotson!" he said courteously; the words, indeed, were more courteous than truthful, and represented the speaker's sense of a conversational necessity rather than any actual fact. "No doubt it presents to me, as a new-comer, picturesque points which are over-familiar to its inhabitants. But probably the balance is struck for the Alnchester people by what I may perhaps call the pride of ownership."

He smiled suavely as he finished, but the smile did not touch his eyes. They were scanning Mrs. Vallotson's profile half-furtively, as though almost without their owner's consciousness.

Mrs. Vallotson paused a moment, almost as though she felt his scrutiny and permitted it. Her own face was set like a rock, and her very lips were colourless.

"We do not admire the old part of the city," she said. "But all the newer parts have been greatly improved during the past twenty years."

"Quite so!" was the courteous reply.

An absent, preoccupied tone had come into Sir William Karslake's voice. Mrs. Vallotson had not turned her face away again, nor had her eyes left him; and the furtive glance with which he had regarded her was becoming almost a stare.

Neither of the two turned, or even seemed to be aware of any movement about them, when Lady Karslake and North Branston, who had been talking easily together on the other side of the great fireplace, rose, and strolled to the other end of the room to look at a picture of which they had been speaking.

"Quite so!" repeated Sir William Karslake vaguely. "You—have lived in Alnchester all your life, I believe?"

His voice was suave still, but it was the suavity of habit, mechanical, constrained, and rather ghastly. He was still staring straight into her face, and there was a moment's dead silence.

Then Mrs. Vallotson's white lips moved. She moistened them involuntarily as it seemed, and with her eyes still holding his she said in a low voice, the absolute calmness of which was almost horribly unnatural:

"You think you know me! You are mistaken."

The speech was no answer to the words he had spoken. His question died between them, utterly ignored by both man and woman in the presence of something unspoken which had risen between them.

Slowly, as she spoke, all that was indefinite and suppressed in Sir William Karslake's expression developed; every line of his face seemed to become petrified; recognition, blank uncompromising recognition was stamped lividly on every feature, and stared from his eyes. He did not speak; the muscles about his mouth stood out strong and distinct. They sat there by the fire staring each at the other, and from the other end of the room came the murmur of the voices of Lady Karslake and North Branston. They were differing over the picture.

Mrs. Vallotson paused as though to let her words sink into his consciousness. Then she repeated them. The two pairs of eyes held one another as if fascinated; held one another, it might have been, in the strength of the terrible, slowly-growing repulsion common to both.

"You are mistaken. You do not know me. You understand? I am not the person for whom you take me!"

She had spoken very slowly, uttering each word with deliberate emphasis, though her voice was low. And as slowly as she had spoken he answered her, endorsing her words as it were in a hard, strained tone:

"I am mistaken! You are not—the person for whom I take you."

They faced each other for a moment more, and then Sir William Karslake moved abruptly, and the rigidity of his face broke up. He motioned almost fiercely to where North stood at the other end of the room.

"Who—is that?" he said hoarsely.

To her face too there came a desperate flash of expression; a sudden defiance stirred her every feature.

"My brother," she said.

Their eyes met once more.

Sir William Karslake's hands were trembling convulsively; he clenched one of them violently round the arm of his chair.

He was looking at her again, and his eyes were fierce and searching.

"You had no brother!" he said. He spoke, for the first time, rapidly and unevenly. "You had no——"

Their eyes met once more.

A moment later Mrs. Vallotson had risen, and was moving down the room to Lady Karslake.

"I have paid you a long call," she said, in a voice from which every particle of expression was eliminated. "I must say good-bye."

"We shall meet again before long, I hope?" returned Lady Karslake lightly.

She shook hands as she spoke, and Mrs. Vallotson paused. Then, without looking at him, she addressed North Branston.

"You are coming, North?" she said.

He signed assent, shook hands with Lady Karslake, and followed her.

HOLIDAY MOODS.

People have very different notions about a holiday. I know a cut-and-dried man of business, aged sixty or so, who prides himself on never having been out of his birth-town for three successive days. He has not much patience with his clerks when these entreat for a little extra recreation. All the change he wants, he says, he gets by going from one department of his manufactory to another. He may thus be imagined spending a lively August in the export section of his works, where the air is certainly a little less confined than that of his private office, among Russia leather ledgers and musty invoice files.

It is difficult even yet to make our elders understand how the younger generation crave "fresh woods and pastures new" when the year is in the full glory of its verdure. They do not see that the conditions of existence nowadays are otherwise than they were forty or fifty years ago.

Here is the text of a brief interchange of words on this subject between an old lady of eighty and her grand-daughter, who, somewhat shyly, had mentioned to her aged relative her plan of a cycle tour with another girl.

"Do you mean, my dear," enquires grandmamma, with wide-open old eyes, "that you cannot get on without this fortnight of hoydenish existence in the open air?"

Grand-daughter laughs gently as she replies:

"Of course, dear grandmother, I dare say I should not die all at once if I gave it up. But I pant for it—I really do."

"You pant for it! How extraordinary! When your grandfather was alive, he found one week's visit to London enough excitement for him in seventeen years."

"But you don't see, dear grandmother, how different things are now. I——"

"Perhaps I don't, my dear," interposes the old lady, with a delightful assumption of severity. "I look forward to heaven and eternity for my holiday."

Shrewd grand-daughter smiles, and her eyes gleam with quiet satisfaction as she retorts:

"That will be a very long holiday indeed, dear grandmother."

Grandmamma hereupon frowns prettily, rustles her gown, and asks her young relative to be kind enough to ring for tea.

There is no doubt about it; this fashion of frequent and emphatic holidays has become almost a passion with many of us. We have, thanks to inventions of one kind and another, got the measure of our little globe so exactly, and know the possibilities it affords us on its several lines of latitude so well, so that we can, if we will, obtain pleasurable change every week of the fifty-two. Broadly, we have the south of France for the winter; London for the spring at its best; the country for the melting days of an old-fashioned summer—if we are blessed with it; the moors and the purple Western Isles, with their midges and hotel bills, for the autumn; and a snug Christmas at home somewhere brings the year to an agreeable close.

Of course, this is a programme only for the most fortunate of us. But it is one that is followed with fair impartiality by many. The minority may, if they will, sigh and wish it was theirs also; or they may do better by striving with all their might to bring themselves to that degree of worldly prosperity which shall place it in their power.

In contrast with such enviable scope for change we may put the single day in the country with which our excellent clergy and others indulge so many of the youngsters of our towns. That, if you like, is a fervid experience.

The other morning I joined a canal boat-load of ragged children bound for their annual outing. They were of ages from five to fifteen, and their rags were as picturesque as the blend of beeches, larch, and oaks by the waterside. Their clamour

as they climbed into the boat was good to hear, each with his or her tin mug clattering an accompaniment. Their interest in the trivial rural sights they saw was as pathetic as diverting. The more lusty of the boys could hardly be kept from hurling themselves into the water, and the more vigorous of the girls sang hymns one after the other, with bright eyes, and hands folded in their laps or twined about each other's necks.

This was the first course of their banquet of delight. When they were let loose in the spacious meadows ten miles from a town, they could not for a few minutes realise that they were free to run where they pleased without the repressive interference of some one with a "Hi, there, you little beggar, clear off that grass, or I'll give you something to make you!" They learnt the lesson soon enough, though. Then, before their eager little hands, daisies and buttercups, meadow-sweet and foxgloves fell fast. They even plucked bunches of common grass, and viewed their treasure fondly.

A field-mouse had the ill luck to show himself near one of the boys. A chase ensued. The mouse was caught, hugged with pride, and in a trice crushed to death.

"What is it, master?" asked the elated child, as he exposed the flattened carcase, surrounded by a group of youngsters as eager as himself.

And so on through the glorious avenue of swings, races for sweets and cakes, an unlimited tea at tables spread in the middle of the meadow—with strawberries picked that very afternoon—more running and jumping, and the final journey home in the old canal boat.

"What is the matter?" I asked a pretty little maid of eight or nine who was sitting with clasped hands in one corner of the boat, nursing a little packet of fruit and sweets wrapped in her handkerchief. There were tears on her cheeks. The twilight glow shone on them, and the young moon among the crimsoned wisps of clouds seemed trying to do the same.

"Oh, please," the little maid whispered, "I'm so happy I don't know what to do."

The words came with a fresh gush of tears. Upon my soul, I could, if I would, have cried with her.

We adults scarcely know or rather remember—for we ought to know—the ease with which these less fortunate little ones of the great family of human beings may be lifted, for a time at all events, from earth to heaven. For the price of a mutton chop you may give a slum child seven or eight hours of such happiness as you are lucky if you yourself may ever again hope to experience.

Some people are so omnivorous in their energy that they cannot take a holiday without also giving themselves a holiday task. I sympathise with them. There was a time when I also felt that way. I either took with me the grammar of a language new to me, or a stiff book, or an educative plan to which I proposed to devote all my wandering thoughts.

But nowadays I do no such thing. If I can get on to the top of a high mountain on a cloudless day, and there lie with my pipe and no thoughts in particular, shielded from flies by my smoke and a handkerchief, but with heaven's blue sky unobscured to stare at—this, I am almost ashamed to say, suffices me. The perfume of the heather and the murmur of the breeze gives me all the society I want. And so I let the hours drift by as they will.

Or I get into a boat on an inland lake, dear Windermere from preference, and hold the white sail while a procession of green woods, motley hills, and purple mountains pass before me, with the whispering of the water at the bows for company. At such times I am lamentably vacuous and unresponsive. The passing bee or butterfly, or the white gull that skims the lake, is more to me than that other boat towards which, perchance, I drive imperceptibly while holding the tiller. And even the bee, or the moth, or the bird, is little enough to me then.

Yet this is my ideal of a holiday—for the time.

On the other hand, as I have said, there are people who do but change their skies and worry out a new assortment of cares. Either the fresh surroundings are to beget a new novel, or are to be considered microscopically as material for a magazine article, or as possible human material for social schemes and ambitions—such as the wedding of a daughter—or what not.

I know a worthy lady who annually migrates from town to some lovely part of the country, and during her six weeks' change of air reckons to write six hundred pages of manuscript, two hundred and fifty words to the page. She is jaded when she leaves the metropolis, and when she returns she has deepened the wrinkles which are already, I am sorry to say, too deeply graven on her earnest brow.

And she calls this a holiday! It is

about as much a holiday as the convict's change of air, when he is moved with a chained gang of his fellows from Portland to Dartmoor.

The thing to do, I am convinced, is to keep one's workaday skin tolerably loose on one's body at all times, so that at a few hours' notice one may step forth bodily from it, and leave it to its own affairs safely locked up in the study or the counting-house. The result is benefit all round.

It is most instructive to mark how our artisans take their pleasure on one of the few general holidays of the year. There are excursion trains for those who can afford those somewhat ambitious enterprises. But the excursion trains are not in it as an attraction with the long, four-horsed brakes in which they can journey in companies of thirty or forty to some sylvan retreat a score or so miles from their native place.

They; their large-bodied, beshawled wives; and their voluble children, all crowd into the vehicles, and as soon as these have started, troll forth hymns for the entertainment of the circumambient air as well as themselves. You would almost suppose the horses entered into the spirit of the occasion—at the outset. But the poor quadrupeds soon realise that they are in for a vexatious spell of work, and bow their heads humbly to the responsibility set upon them.

A picnic of this kind is always contrived to be in the vicinity of a public-house of accredited fame for its beer. Thus, while the youngsters are tumbling about on the hillsides or "berrying" in the woods, the oldsters — not unaccompanied by their wives—call for one quart after another. They smoke and drink, and search their minds for memories of the days when they were like their children, or when, maybe, they did their courting on this self-same spot. It is not a highly sensational form of holiday, but it has its charms. And in the evening the horses are reluctantly again backed into the shafts, and in the waning light the earlier canticles—and others—are renewed.

Perhaps the worst feature of these merry-makings is the unconscionably long and frequent halts made at each tavern on the way home. It were a sin against custom in my part of the country not to become "mellow," at least, long ere the steaming and footsore horses are pulled up for the night. The singing and shouting of the lads and lasses, and their decidedly open manifestation of an endearing interest in each other, combine with the invertebrate condition of their elders to make up a picture that is not altogether humorous, but is very characteristic.

But the ways of the tripper are at any rate as droll as those of the ironworker and the collier in the holiday brake "Princess," "Victoria," or "The Duke of York." Never was he more to the front than now, and never perhaps was he better worth studying.

I have quite lately seen him in full force, day after day, on Windermere's placid waters. He leaves home at midnight or thereabouts of the morning (pardon the bull!) when his pleasure is, he hopes, destined to begin. He is not so prone to solace himself with beer as with spirituous liquors. Of these, however, he carries a supply that would last any ordinary toper on ordinary occasions a week. They comfort him through the chilly hours which precede the dawn; they enable him joyously to drink the sun's health if that desirable planet elects to rise visibly; he refers to them when he is near his destination, and throughout the day he makes constant calls upon them for amicable support.

It is a pity that liquor should play the enormous part it does in the holiday trips of the populace. I know not, however, how it can be helped. I have seen a score of these soddened pleasure-seekers get from the railway cars into the midst of scenery sweet enough to cheer even a broken heart, and appear all unmindful of it. There have been placards on the walls hard by telling them of the eternal damnation they are hastening to in thus debasing themselves. And there have been well-meaning gentlemen with blue ribbons in their buttonholes, who have had the courage to accost them and try to get an improving word edgewise into their clouded wits. All to no purpose, however.

A sorry sight this of Lakeland disgraced by a horde of blaspheming, reeling excursionists, some of whom can with difficulty keep themselves on their legs while they make their way down to Windermere's shore.

They may be seen an hour or two afterwards zigzagging about Grasmere and Rydal until the dinner-hour. The less said the better about their return to Windermere's railway station, where they often have to be lifted into the train like so many pigs.

I don't like painting such a picture, but it had better be done. All Lakeland's cheap

day trippers are not of this kidney; nor anything like the majority of them. But there are quite enough of these tipsy souls among them to make even the local press —though interested in the money thus brought into the district—utter its reproofs and paragraphs of warning. Let the criminals look to it, or they will bring Wordsworth's country into a disrepute akin to that which a generation or two ago fell upon certain metropolitan pleasure resorts.

I like better to tell of the way in which a schoolboy nephew spent his holiday at my cottage in Lakeland. Not a day passed on which he did not bathe twice in the lake, reckless of the litigation in progress about the water's pollution from sewage. When he was not bathing, eating—with holiday appetite—or sleeping, he was either rowing from bay to bay, fishing for perch, chasing butterflies, climbing mountains, or dissecting with youthful enthusiasm the various dead bodies he brought home for the purpose.

He had a room given up to him for his naturalistic pursuits. It was not always a pretty spectacle, I assure you, this room. There were bloated toads in it, some dead, some living, slugs and snails, rats and mice, and the carcases of birds. Have you ever taken an interest in the internal economy of a black roadside slug? I had not hitherto. But this young votary of science taught me much while he was experimentally improving himself. He made me see, too, how lamentably I had wasted a generation or so of time, in that I too had not earlier pined to know how a toad lives, and breathes, and has its being.

It seems to me that one must be either very young or very old rightly to appreciate and use a holiday. In the middle period of life it is so difficult not to think of the wrong things at the wrong time, instead of thinking of the right things only or nothing at all.

By the way, the above-mentioned nephew let loose a box of five-and-twenty spiders—assorted—about the dinner-table one day. This proves that he too had his imperfections, as well as his amiable enthusiasms.

WHALING IN THE ANTARCTIC.

Hardly have the jagged peaks and grim grey cliffs of the Falklands lost themselves in the sea when the work of fitting-up on board the "Albatross" commences in earnest. The crow's-nest is run up to the mast-head. The huge coils of rope are dragged from below, and spliced together on the half-deck: five coils for each boat's line, giving a total length of about four hundred yards.

The operation of coiling the lines in the bottom of each boat is now entered upon. This is a work of time and art, the least hitch in the running gear, when a whale is struck, meaning certain loss and a possible catastrophe.

This task being completed by a crew, it is notified by a triumphant hurrah, after which the minor details—as lances, water-cask, axe, bucket, gun, and harpoon—are added.

A great deal of blank-cartridge firing goes on during the cleaning of the whale guns, which gives a lively effect, and, together with the boyish eagerness and hilarity of the crews, tends more than any words to convey the fact that the sport we have come so far to seek is now near at hand.

Gradually the air grows colder, and now, on the twenty-sixth of November, we greet with a sounding cheer the first iceberg of the Antarctic. A fair breeze is blowing, and the great flat-topped mass comes pitching and rolling upon our port bow. It bears slight resemblance to the bergs from Baffin's Bay, which are pinnacled as they pass upward. Hardly has the first passed our view when a large body of them is sighted, and for many hours we steer in perilous proximity to the floating giants.

A sharp look-out is now kept, as at any moment we may enter the pack ice, or come into collision with a wandering berg. All is excitement on board. Eager knots of seamen, on watch and off, stand on the forepeak, or lie over the bow, discussing the probabilities and improbabilities. Men sleep lightly, and, at the least shout or rush of feet across the deck, spring from their berths with the eagerness of schoolboys.

The weather grows foul, squally, and misty. This gives an excuse for criticism on the part of Wallace the harpooneer, who is Lord High Critic for the ship's company, and he talks more loudly of the blue sky and the bright sun that shines eternally in the frozen North.

I must say that we hear him with regret, but we do not murmur, and our patience is rewarded.

The foul weather is a memory, and the

breeze now sweeps in soft airs loaded with the ozone from a thousand ice-clad islands, and untold miles of floating snow. On the port side, like a bat's wing, rises the grim outline of a sterile land, steadily lessening as we steam on. Around us is pack ice. The sun with a radiant glory beats upon our heads. The sea dances with a thousand lights, breaking in soft murmurs on the glittering ice-blocks. Around us the countless myriads of birds circle and soar; plume themselves on the snow-crowned terraces; and scream, and chatter, and fight, in the long ripples of our wake.

I am up in the crow. Resting my arms on the rail, I let my eyes wander over the spreading leagues of sea and ice, and drink in the glories of this dazzling land—glories that will never fade till the past is all forgotten.

A flock of lovely sheath-bills hovers over me in idle curiosity, but, on extending my hand, they sweep down the wind like a shower of cherry blossom in the spring. Great carrion gulls follow the ship and croak hoarsely, hanging hawk-like over the mizen-top. Icebergs tower on all sides. The air is so keen, the reflection so brilliant, and the whole scene so startling, yet so peaceful, that I fall into a dreamy reverie.

The days slip by, and it is now the fourth of December. We are in latitude sixty-five, longitude ninety degrees, and steaming leisurely amid a field of mixed ice. The field is open to an unexpected extent. Small blocks predominate, but here and there the sides of a vast floe or flat-topped iceberg rise over all.

Now and again we meet with a stretch of tighter ice, but with some masterly dodging, and an occasional determined charge with our sturdy bows, we have small difficulty in effecting a passage.

On board an unwonted excitement prevails. The captain has discovered in his "food-bag," which drags astern, unmistakeable signs that the tiny animalcula on which the black whale feeds is present in great quantity. "Spoutings" have also been seen, and the oily patches of water which the fish leaves in its passage have also been perceived by a few.

The indefatigable captain is aloft, devouring the distance with the long glass. The six boats on the davits are all ready for instant action. The guns swing on their swivels; and the broad, cruel barbed head of the harpoon looks grimly from the mouth of each.

The members of the watch on deck are whistling, dancing, or leaning over the side in eager anticipation of a coming "fall." Suddenly the merriment ceases, for away on the horizon rises a deep line of cloud, gradually heightening and swiftly approaching.

All eyes turn towards the west, and more than one grumbling murmur escapes from the stern lips, for nothing is more fatal to whaling than the heavy mists met with at the Poles. It is the Arctic plague again. For days it will settle around the wretched whaler like a fallen cloud, and woe be to the unhappy boat that is caught in it, for the very sound of the siren sinks echoless in its dismal shroud.

Soon the evil curtain is upon us. The captain descends from his perch. The engines cease throbbing. The whole ship lies like a silent log on the impassive surface of the sea.

I smoke a pipe and play "checkers" in the engine-room. Gloomy mumblings, like the deep mutterings of a disturbed geyser, rise from the fo'c'sle; while round the galley fire sits a half-circle of seasoned salts, smoking savagely, or listening moodily to the singing of their tin tea-kettles.

During the second dog-watch the well-known blast of a whale rouses the watch with a start. But the evil mist prevents a sight of the fish.

Shortly it blows again, and so near is it that the fine spray actually showers on deck, and sweeps our faces as we lean over the side.

It passes close beneath us. The harpooneers rush frantically to the boats to get a shot at it, but, phantom-like, it disappears in the mist.

Hardly have we recovered when a chorus of blasts echoes on all sides, and the stout ship trembles and quivers from stem to stern as a man taken with the palsy. Amazement writes itself on the ship's company. Never has the like of this happened to any before. Never may it happen again.

For a full hour the giant creatures make merry around us, scraping themselves on the rough bottom of their new friend, and half swamping us with the great waves they raise in their leviathan gambols.

But at last they leave us, and we retire below, away from the hateful fog, to nurse our own bitter feelings in the silence of despair.

Two days drag slowly past. Still the curtain is around us, and a settled frown marks the faces of all. Will it continue

for ever? Whales have been heard blowing, but no boat can leave the ship.

Suddenly—and may the delight live for ever!—a light breeze springs up, and, as if by magic, the hateful veil vanishes into the blue sky.

The captain is in the nest, and now his head shows over the rim, and he calls down to the mate on the bridge:

"Fish on the starboard quarter! All hands on deck, and see that the boats are ready! Up aloft, and shake out these sails!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" comes the response, and the watch springs to the ratlines.

The mate leaves the bridge, and up come the sailors from the half-deck and forecastle like a swarm of rats, some in their shirts and some in their trousers, but seldom in both. Eagerly sixty pairs of eyes search the sea, and sixty tongues clatter to the same tune.

Their curiosity satisfied, they dive below to equip themselves for the coming hunt, and a confused noise rises to the deck like the buzz of wasps in an underground byke.

"There she blows!" yells the cook, who has perched himself on the crosstrees, as we notice a fine jet of spray rise on to the sky-line. But the warning finger of the captain stops him further. Soon all are equipped and waiting for the order. It comes:

"First mate's boat lower away there! Mind and keep her tail on, and take your time, lads."

"Ay, ay, sir!" sings the mate, while the men give a faint cheer, fearful of disturbing their prizes.

In one minute the tackles are let go, the boat is in the water, and with great sweeps the rowers bend to their work.

The whales, three in number, lie like black islands of marble in contrast to the pearly-hued ice-blocks. Tiny waves break over their mountainous sides, falling backwards in silvery strands to their native depths. And at intervals there comes to us the deep "roust," as the glittering fountains play upward, and spread themselves over the shimmering surface of the sea.

As the boat nears the foremost one, not a sound breaks the silence, and every sight strains itself to the utmost.

Nearer and nearer it draws to the great mass lying unconscious of all danger.

The first mate unships his oar and stands by the gun. Still it approaches. Suddenly a white puff of smoke bursts from the bow, and next instant a sharp sound trips over the ocean.

"They're fast! They're fast!" rings through the ship, followed by a deafening cheer as the boat is seen tearing through the water.

Up goes the Jack, signalling that they are fast, and another cheer rolls over the ocean and resounds among the ice-floes.

Faster and faster flies the boat, the line rushing furiously over the bow, and a wall of foam standing before her. Far, far down is leviathan vainly endeavouring to escape from his cruel enemy in the dark, cold depths beneath.

An oar is raised as a signal for help, and immediately three more boats are manned and lowered. Off they go to the rescue, the crews with their teeth set, their nostrils dilated, and the stout larch oars bending like bows to their brawny backs.

They are in time. The first boat of the three hastily splices on to the remaining fathoms of rope in the first mate's boat, and so itself becomes the "fast" one.

So terrible is the pace, that the harpooneer stands, axe in hand, ready to cut shall a hitch occur in the running.

Soon a third boat is the fast one, and yet the whale has only risen once.

At last!

"There she rises, boys," comes the glad shout, as an immense jet of water spouts into the air, and the sea is lashed into a white foam by the monster's tail.

Off go the free boats to the attack with harpoons and lances ready. But the whale does not wait for them. Away it goes again, heading this time for a vast floe. The line furrs over the bow, and a constant supply of water is required to prevent the wood taking fire.

On; on. The joyful eagerness on board is turning to fear. Will it reach the floe? Will they have to cut?

Soon the chase is beyond our unaided vision. The captain's eyes are buried in the glass. Hours seem to pass.

There is a shout from the deck. The boats are returning. One, two, three we count. But where is the fourth? Smashed or dragged under the floe is the general opinion, pressed home by the cook, whose nature has been soured by a constant companionship with bad junk and sour pea-soup.

A deep silence falls upon the forecastle, but when the boats come alongside we find that the cook is wrong, and immediately the spirits of all rise again, so sudden and variable are the moods of the whaler.

The lost boat, it appears, is still fast to

the fish, which is lying under the floe dead, but defying the united strength of the four boats to withdraw it.

Instantly the engines are set at work, and we proceed to the scene of action at full speed. When we arrive, we find the boat calmly lying-by at the floe edge, and the crew snowballing each other like a crowd of schoolboys.

At the command of the captain the six boats unite themselves in a grand effort, but of no avail. Dynamite is then tried. But the dynamite is a failure.

Again our spirits fall. What is to be done? There is a long discussion between the captain and the mates, and a conclusion is at last come to. The final chance is to be tried, with a whale for the venture.

The fast rope is secured on deck, and the engineer slips below. The engines revolve slowly, but the pace increases steadily as the hempen line tautens to the strain.

There is no movement yet, and the rope is singing like a fiddle-string. Will the harpoon hold? Will the rope stand? Oh, the anxiety that besets us as we watch!

I hang over the side and watch the water. There is a movement, but I will not swear to it. There is a shout—"We move! we move!" Then a long succession of hurrahs, as we discover, for a certainty, that we are making way.

A little later the noise is truly deafening as the mighty monster rises from beneath the floe like a gigantic life-buoy. The sky is rent with cheers and counter-cheers, and the flocks of birds, daring as they are, give us a wide berth till the noise ceases.

Soon the whale is alongside. Nose and tail tackles are rigged up, and everything is in readiness for the flinchers, who, with sharp spikes on their feet, blubber knives, spades, and the like, betake themselves on to the glossy back of the great cetacean.

WOMEN AS DRAMATISTS.

Though we can count women novelists by the score, the number of women dramatists is extremely limited, and can easily be told off on the fingers. To see two plays written by women and produced at leading London theatres is a most unusual experience. This has been the case during the theatrical season of 1894.

"An Aristocratic Alliance," adapted by Lady Greville for the English stage, and produced at the Criterion, was speedily followed by Miss Fletcher's play of "Mrs. Lessingham," at the Garrick.

Though neither made a conspicuous success, yet their production shows that modern women are not without the dramatic faculty, and are capable of writing for the stage. In the last century, all literary young ladies tried their 'prentice hands at a tragedy. One of these ambitious aspirants brought her production to Dr. Johnson, and begged him to look over it.

He gruffly told her that she could find out the mistakes as well as he could.

"But, sir," she said, "I have no time. I have so many irons in the fire."

"Then, madam," growled the Doctor, "the best thing I can advise you to do is to put your tragedy in along with your irons."

Before Johnson's day, however, one woman had made a very high reputation as a dramatist, though her line was comedy, not tragedy. Susanna Centlivre wrote no fewer than eighteen plays, three of which, "The Wonder," "The Busybody," and "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," kept the stage for a hundred years, and are even now remembered as remarkable performances for a woman of that day. Congreve gave up writing plays in a fit of pique, because his "Way of the World" was totally neglected, while Mrs. Centlivre's "Wonder" attracted crowded houses.

Her story is a romance in itself. Born about 1667 in Ireland, where her father, a Lincolnshire landowner, had taken refuge in order to escape from the persecution he endured as a Dissenter, Susanna was left an orphan at twelve years old. At fifteen she made her way to England, intending to go on foot to London and seek her fortune. On the way she was overcome by fatigue, and sat down by the roadside weeping bitterly. A young Cambridge student happened to be passing at the time, and was struck with pity at her forlorn condition. Along with pity was a stronger feeling; he persuaded her to accompany him to Cambridge, dressed in men's clothes. Here she remained for some time, and picked up a smattering of learning and a few scraps of Latin. Provided with a little money, she went on her way, and soon found an admirer in a nephew of Sir Stephen Fox, who married her, but died within the year, leaving her a widow at eighteen. Her next husband was a Mr. Carroll, who was killed in a duel, so she was a widow for the second time, and tried to support herself by turning actress. Notwithstanding her

youth, wit, and beauty, she failed to make her mark, and then she took to writing comedies. Her dialogue is easy and natural, and she has a remarkable fertility for inventing startling incidents. One of her characters, Marplot, in "The Busybody," has become a by-word for a foolish man, always spoiling the schemes of the lovers. When Sir George Airey hides in the chimney, Marplot pulls down the chimney-board and discovers him. In "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," the hero, Colonel Fainwell, passes himself off as Simon Pure the Quaker, which has given rise to the expression, the "real Simon Pure," constantly in use at the present day, though few are able to trace the origin of the expression.

Mrs. Centlivre's plays are coarse to a degree; she partook of the coarseness of the age of Charles the Second, and never tried to rise above it. Her third husband, Mr. Centlivre, was principal cook to Queen Anne. She did not long survive her third marriage, and died in 1723.

Nearly eighty years afterwards, Joanna Baillie made a sensation in the literary world by her "Plays on the Passions." She worked on a plan of her own; each of the great passions—anger, jealousy, love, envy, hatred, pride—was to be illustrated by a tragedy and a comedy. These plays stand out for their masculine strength and vigour, for the dignity of the blank verse, and for the wonderful insight into various phases of character. "Women," says Byron in his journal, "except Joanna Baillie, can't write tragedy. They have not seen enough of life." It was a remarkable exception, made in favour of the quiet daughter of a Scotch Presbyterian minister, whose life had been as tame and monotonous as a Quakers' meeting. Sir Walter Scott was enthusiastic about his friend Joanna Baillie, and even ranked her with Shakespeare.

"De Montford," the tragedy illustrating hatred, was produced at Drury Lane by John Kemble, in April, 1800, and ran for eleven nights, Mrs. Siddons taking the part of Jane De Montford, which had been expressly written for her. She liked the part so much that she said to Joanna Baillie in her grand, imperious way: "Make me more Jane De Montfords!"

"Constantine Paleologus," a tragedy taken from Gibbon's account of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, was brought out at the Surrey Theatre as a melodrama, and was also performed at Liverpool, Dublin, and Edinburgh. At Edinburgh, in 1820, Joanna Baillie herself witnessed the performance. One of her most successful pieces was what she called her Highland play, "The Family Legend," which was acted at Edinburgh, under the fostering care of Sir Walter Scott. He wrote to his friend Joanna: "You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give success to a play, and your conception will fall short of the complete and decided triumph of 'The Family Legend.' Everything that pretended to distinction, whether from rank or literature, was in the boxes, and in the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity, as I have seldom, if ever, witnessed in the same place." "The Family Legend" was played for fourteen nights, and after it, "De Montford" was revived at the Edinburgh Theatre with some success. Two of Joanna Baillie's plays were brought out in London simultaneously, "The Separation" at Covent Garden, and "Henriquez" at Drury Lane. Neither of them made much impression. Macready used to say that Joanna Baillie had a want of passion; but there is plenty of passion in "De Montford" and "Basil," it is rather a defective knowledge of human life. Notwithstanding her undoubted dramatic genius, Joanna Baillie was ignorant of stage requirements, and so her plays read better than they act. They will, however, always remain remarkable achievements; there is nothing womanish or weak about them, and passages of real force and fire abound.

Mrs. Inchbald, nine years older than Joanna Baillie, made her mark by comedy, not by tragedy. An actress herself, it was a long time before managers would condescend to look at her illegible MSS. The first was taken by Colman, who gave her a hundred guineas for it It was called "A Mogul Tale, or the Descent of the Balloon," and was acted at the Haymarket on the sixth of July, 1784, she herself playing a small part in it. The hesitation of speech which she had conquered with great difficulty, appeared when she came to the words, "Since we left H—yde Pa—a—rk C—c—corner," and she very nearly broke down altogether.

"I'll Tell You What," a five-act play, produced on the fifth of August, 1785, added to her reputation as a writer for the stage, and was followed by "Such Things Are," brought out at Covent Garden on the twenty-second of May, 1787.

After this came a long list of farces and adaptations from the French. In many of them we find that easy flow of dialogue and

skilful insight into character which is shown to a much greater extent in Mrs. Inchbald's novel of "A Simple Story."

Hannah More did not attempt comedy. Her first play was founded on Metastasio's drama of "Attilio Regulo," and was called "The Inflexible Captive." It was brought out at the Bath Theatre, and when she asked Garrick to write an epilogue for it, he replied: "Write you an epilogue! Give you a pinch of snuff!" He did write one, however, which pleased her so much that she set about her tragedy of "Percy," which was acted in London with great success.

"The reception of 'Percy,'" writes Hannah to her sisters, "exceeded my most sanguine wishes. I am just returning from the second night, and it was, if possible, received more favourably than on the first. One tear is worth a thousand hands, and I had the satisfaction to see even the men shed them in abundance. . . . I will only say as Garrick does, that I have had so much flattery that I might, if I would, choke myself in my own pap."

The two sisters, Sally and Patty, trundled up from Bristol in the coach to enjoy the triumph of their much-admired sister, who was presented with a wreath of Roman laurel, and hailed as the first dramatic author of the day. Better still, four thousand copies of the play were sold in a fortnight, and guineas flowed in freely. One more play, "The Fatal Falsehood," was performed at the Adelphi, but Hannah More was at that time in such grief at the death of Garrick, that she had not the heart even to go and see it. Her sister had the full pleasure of the success, and relates a story of a maidservant coming back with red eyes, and saying, "A great many respectable people cried too." By and by, from religious scruples, Hannah More gave up writing for the stage, and contented her dramatic instincts by writing "Sacred Dramas."

Miss Mitford's experience as a dramatist was varied with strange flashes of success, alternated by long periods of suspense and disappointment. "Julian" was her first tragedy actually performed. It was brought out at Covent Garden in March, 1823, with Macready in the principal part, and was taken off at the end of the eighth night, though it was going brilliantly to crowded houses. Miss Mitford got two hundred pounds for it. She closes one of her letters by saying: "I would rather serve in a shop, rather scour floors, rather nurse children than undergo these tremendous and interminable disputes and this unwomanly publicity."

"Foscari," her second acted play, was tossed about for four years before she could write on the outside of her letter to "Three Mile Cross" the welcome words, "Good news." It was really good news: "There was such an immense house that you might have walked over the heads in the pit, and great numbers were turned away. . . . Dear, dear Mrs. Trollope, between joy at the success and sympathy with the play, cried herself half blind. For two acts the white handkerchief was going continually."

For the "Foscari" Miss Mitford received one hundred pounds on the third, the ninth, the fifteenth, and the twentieth nights. Yet who thinks of it now? It is by "Our Village"—those breezy sketches of the country life that Miss Mitford knew so well—that she is always remembered. Another of her plays, "Rienzi," was brought out at Drury Lane on the eleventh of October, 1828, and she wrote that it was "a magnificent performance; the triumph complete and decisive; the houses crowded—you might hear a pin drop." Yet another play, "Inez de Castro," after being acted with success at Drury Lane, was brought out at the Pavilion Theatre under the title of "The Last of the Romans."

Since Miss Mitford, women have not attempted tragedy, with the exception of the two ladies who write under the name of "Michael Field." Their play, "A Question of Memory," was brought out this year at the Independent Theatre, but only at a matinée, as a trial performance, when it met with much adverse criticism.

THE CAPTAIN'S CONVICTION.

A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I.

He was a puzzle to his neighbours, was the Captain, though without any intention on his part. They couldn't understand him despite his transparent simplicity of character, or rather, perhaps, in consequence of it; for it is hard for average humanity to realise that transparent simplicity can be genuine, especially when found in connection with grey hairs and a weatherbeaten face.

For the Captain was a man who had seen much of life, though life in a larger sense than that of cities; he had made many voyages during the thirty years of his employment in the Merchant Service, and had

visited strange lands. He knew more of men than of manners, and took a wide view of human nature, and his obligations to his neighbour; nor did he seek to narrow his sympathies by any over hard-and-fast line of demarcation between his neighbour and the rest of the world. All of which things were naturally very perplexing to the commonplace inhabitants of a small provincial town; who, for the most part, believed there was something behind the old man's seeming simplicity, or—to state the matter broadly—that he was by no means such a fool as he chose to appear.

Moreover, he was a lonely man, and this seemed strange for one of his kindly nature. He had no relations; or, if he had, none ever visited him. He lived alone, save for an elderly and taciturn widow who "did" for him; alone in his ugly little house, which was one of a row of little houses each uglier than the last; and every evening he smoked his solitary pipe in the dingy square of gravel and turf that he called his front garden, as though to distinguish it from that at the back, which, however, was but a yard, and contained nothing but packing-cases that had come from nobody knew where, nobody knew when, and had remained there piled up with extraordinary neatness ever since. The row of houses formed one side of a respectable, but eminently commonplace road; a road that had nothing in the world to distinguish it from half-a-dozen others in the little town, save that it was perhaps a trifle drearier than the rest. But the Captain apparently liked the dreariness; at least, he found no fault with it, but stayed on contentedly enough; and the months grew to years, and the girl of some seventeen summers, who had lived nearly all her life on the opposite side of the road, could not recollect a time when there had been no grey-headed, weatherbeaten old gentleman, with a gruff voice and a kindly smile, in the little house over the way.

Why had the Captain ever come to live in this dull little town? He was not a native of Southbridge; he had—so far as was known—no associations with the place in the past. That, having once established himself there, he should remain, was natural enough, or so his neighbours thought; but—why had he ever come?

Maisie, the girl on the opposite side of the road, knew more of him than anybody else; she, and she alone, was privileged to visit him whenever she pleased, secure of a welcome from the old man, who—despite his natural kindliness—was by no means easy of access to the rest of the world. He had known her from a child, and she had made her way to his heart when—at the age of six—she had presented herself at his parlour-door one fine spring morning, laden with wild flowers, and looking a veritable Queen of the May.

"I'se been gatherin' primroses, and has brought you some. May I put them in water for you, Captain?" she said, and the Captain gladly consented; though he checked her, kindly but firmly, when she was about to appropriate his tobacco-jar for the purpose. From that hour the two had been sworn friends and confederates; and rarely a day passed that the child did not run across to him, full of some highly important little matters of her own, and sure of his interest and sympathy, silently though they might often be expressed.

Maisie's life, too, was a somewhat lonely one, for she was not related to the people with whom she lived, and in whose charge she had been placed when but a few months old. They cared for her conscientiously, but without affection; saw that she had plenty to eat and drink, but starved her spiritually; gave her no companionship, but more than enough liberty. Her friendship with the Captain relieved them of a great responsibility; though—had that friendship never existed—it is probable that the responsibility would never have been recognised.

Thus the solitary man and the lonely child had much in common, and as she grew older the tie between this strangely matched pair of friends grew ever stronger. The Captain was no great talker, but this mattered the less as Maisie was a born chatterbox, and had few opportunities of airing her gifts in that way for the benefit of a really appreciative audience. But the Captain was really appreciative, and she knew it; and favoured him with long arrears of irrelevant small-talk on every occasion when they met.

And yet, though the girl talked so much, it was wonderful how little the Captain really knew about her—perhaps because she knew so little herself. She spoke so frankly on all subjects, that if she said nothing about her relations it was probably because there was nothing to say; and he took everything for granted, and never for a moment realised how little she had told him about her family, and her somewhat anomalous position in the house over the road. The Captain was the least curious

of men, and troubled himself little about matters that did not concern him; so that no questions from her old friend ever suggested to Maisie that she was really strangely in the dark as to her own history, and was nearly as great a mystery to herself as the Captain was to the rest of the world.

But though the Captain asked no questions, and never even perceived in his single-minded simplicity that there might be questions to ask, Maisie herself wondered not a little. Mrs. Jenkins—the elderly widow in whose care she had grown up—to whom she had once applied for information, had put the matter aside in an off-hand manner that sufficiently discouraged further enquiry.

"Your mother asked me to do for you, and I've done it," she said gruffly. "'Ave you anythin' to say against that? Any complaint to make, or such like? 'Aven't you enough to eat, and good schoolin'—ay, the best that's to be 'ad, and plenty of it? Then what are you grumblin' at?"

"I'm not grumbling, indeed!" poor Maisie protested, truthfully enough. "I'm very grateful to you, but——"

"Oh, there's no call for gratitude neither. Your mother paid me for all as I undertook to do, and I wouldn't 'a' cheated 'er no more than the dead—which she wasn't then, nor—and she that was my schoolfellow in my young days, poor dear, to say nothin' of all she went through arterwards, though it was all along o' 'er own folly and wrong-'eadedness—no, Maisie; I've done my duty by you if I've done no more, and there's no call for you to be pokin' and spyin' into what don't noway concern you. Your mother 'ad 'er reasons for what she did, and it isn't for you to question 'er—or me, which comes to the same thing. A bit of a girl like you, indeed!"

And Mrs. Jenkins bustled out of the room, thereby effectually putting a stop to any further discussion on the subject on that occasion; nor had the girl found courage to resume it on any subsequent opportunity that had arisen.

For Maisie had a proud and a sensitive nature, and she dreaded to hear Mrs. Jenkins speak further of her unknown mother. The subject was to her a sacred one; imagination supplied the place of memory, and the lonely girl had enshrined the image it had created in her inmost heart. Poor child, she had little enough besides to place there!

Better, far better, utter ignorance, than any knowledge that might be imparted to her by Mrs. Jenkins's desecrating voice.

CHAPTER II.

Among the Captain's little peculiarities, none had so greatly impressed his observant neighbours as the manner in which he was accustomed to take his walks abroad. He was a great walker, was the Captain; yet though he would often walk for hours, he never seemed to go any distance. Up and down the quiet road where he lived he paced hour after hour, never leaving it save to cross the street at the further end to the little station, where it was his daily occupation to watch the London trains come in.

We say occupation advisedly, for he took the matter so seriously that to speak of it as an amusement would seem lacking in respect. There was a strangely alert look in his dreamy eyes when thus employed, an almost strained intensity of expression, that was utterly at variance with the old man's manner at other times, and could not but excite remark. As he stood on the platform—himself somewhat screened from observation behind the little bookstall—and watched the newly-arrived passengers pass out, the Captain seemed more alive than any one would have believed possible from seeing him at any other hour. But his animation was as brief as it was intense. No sooner had the last of the travellers passed the spot where he stood, than he turned away, and went back to resume the monotonous walk up and down his own road. He scarcely looked disappointed, those who watched him on these occasions usually averred; apparently his expectation had not been strong enough for that: but a dull listlessness seemed to fall upon him as he turned away, from which he made no attempt to rouse himself; even when, as occasionally happened, some young porter, unaccustomed to his ways, stopped him to enquire: "Was you expectin' of any one, sir?"

"No, no; not now," he would reply in the gruff voice that so strangely belied a most kindly nature. "Some other time; by the next train, perhaps."

But years had passed since this answer had first been given, and still no train had ever brought any one for the Captain; and still he never failed to watch them in with an interest that never seemed to flag.

One afternoon, when he was returning from his usual unsuccessful quest, he saw Maisie's bright face looking eagerly out of his parlour window. She sprang up as she saw him coming, and ran to meet him.

"Oh, Captain, I've been longing for you to come in!" she cried joyfully, as she

threw open the little gate. "There's news, great news, and——"

"She has come back?" he exclaimed. "I knew she would. Thank God!"

The listlessness had gone. It was the face that looked out daily at the station that the Captain now turned on Maisie, but full of a new light, a deeper emotion.

"Come back? No; but coming. How clever of you to guess; and I've never told you a word about her!"

"Where is she, my lass? I must go to her."

"She is coming to-morrow, but there is no need for you to go for her; though it's awfully good of you to think of it. If I may meet her here, out of Mrs. Jenkins's way——"

"Meet her? You? What are you talking of, child? What is she to you that——"

"My mother, Captain. I am speaking of my mother. Oh, you don't understand after all. I thought she was dead; but they never told me so, and it was all a mistake. And she has written to-day that she's coming to see me, and as Mrs. Jenkins has friends staying with her, and not a quiet corner in the house from cellar to attic, I thought that perhaps you wouldn't mind—that I might ask her to come here instead, for—oh, I don't want her to come to Mrs. Jenkins's after all the things she's said, and I haven't told her a word about my letter."

While poor Maisie scrambled and stumbled through her explanation, the Captain's face fell, and the light of anticipation died out of his eyes. Disappointment on his own account, however, did not make him less sympathetic with the girl's delight; and he told her she was welcome to make use of his house, promising that he would leave her in undisputed possession of the parlour till eight o'clock, if her mother could stay so late.

"And I'll tell Mrs. Webb to give you a cup of tea, and something to eat," he added hospitably. "She'll know what your mother will like, for she lived with two single ladies before she came to me. Make your mind easy about that, Maisie, and—— But what's in the wind now? Isn't my course to your liking?"

"Not at all, for I want you to meet my mother, not to avoid her. I want to show her that I have one friend in the world." The girl tried to speak lightly, knowing the Captain's manly abhorrence of a scene; but her voice trembled despite all her efforts to control it, and her great blue eyes filled with tears.

"She doesn't seem to have been much of a friend to you, my lass; and you not knowing whether she was alive or dead!" he said gravely; this aspect of the question evidently presenting itself to him for the first time. "What has she been about all these years?"

"She will tell me all when we meet—oh, I'm sure she had some good reason, or she'd never have let me grow up knowing nothing of her, or of my father either."

"And your father? Is he living, too?"

Something in the Captain's tone implied that in that case he didn't think much of him, and Maisie hastened to defend the parent who—as she had that day ascertained for the first time beyond the possibility of doubt—was no longer in a position to defend himself.

"He died before I was born. That was why my mother went away."

"I should have thought it would have been another reason for her staying," the old man said, with unwonted severity. "Because you'd lost one parent seems a queer reason to give for taking away the other. But there, it isn't for me to judge her. It mayn't have been all plain sailing in those waters she was in, and the winds may have been contrary. Anyway, she's tacked now, and is coming on a straight course. Is she like you, lass?" he added abruptly.

"I don't know. There's no one I could ask but Mrs. Jenkins, and—I would rather not know than ask her!"

"Is that so? Well, well, you'll see for yourself to-morrow."

"And so will you, Captain. Promise me that you'll be in. Remember you're the only friend I have, and—and I am a little bit nervous about meeting her, though she is my mother. I declare I feel quite frightened lest she should be disappointed in me. Of course, I wouldn't own as much to anybody but you."

"You've no call to be frightened, my dear. The mother 'ud be hard to please who was disappointed in you, even if she'd taken a deal more pains with your loading and fitting out than yours seems to have done. She should be a proud and a thankful woman, say I."

"Then be here, and say it!" Maisie laughed. "I'm not to meet her at the station, but to wait for her at Mrs. Jenkins's, or any other quiet place. Think of calling Mrs. Jenkins's a quiet place!

Why, she's always talking; or if she isn't, her daughters are. No, I'm going to write and ask her to come here; and then when you come home from seeing the three-fifteen train in, you'll find us waiting for you."

"She's not coming from London, then?"

"Not to-morrow. She is not very strong, she says; so she will break her journey at Wilminster, and come on by a local train." The girl was silent a moment, and then added regretfully: "And when I told you I had news, you thought the friend had come whom you have expected so long?"

"I thought so, maybe. But don't fret yourself about that, my dear. She'll come in her own time, and no thoughts of mine can make her sooner or later. I'll come in after the three-fifteen, then — unless, of course, she comes by it."

"Of course," said Maisie.

But he was not speaking of her mother, and she knew it.

CHAPTER III.

"SHE" did not come by it, apparently; at least, at the accustomed hour on the following day the Captain might have been seen returning from the station as usual; and the Captain was alone.

He walked slowly, for he felt no great inclination to return home, thinking he should make but a poor third at the interview between Maisie and her unknown mother. He would infinitely have preferred to pace up and down his quiet road till the time should come for her departure; and nothing but his promise to the girl could have overcome his natural reluctance to disturb her in this first hour of her renewed intercourse with one who must necessarily be so much nearer and dearer to her than himself. The Captain was not jealous, far from it; on the contrary, he was truly and honestly glad that Maisie should come under some other womanly influence than that of the estimable but unsympathetic Mrs. Jenkins. He was really fond of her; far too fond to grudge her any good thing that might happen to come in her way just because he might himself cease to fill quite so large a space in her thoughts in consequence; but he did not see of what possible use he could be to the girl just now, and anticipated no pleasure from this meeting with a woman who—so far as he was in a position to judge—had behaved very heartlessly to her child. The Captain was anything but a hard man; he could forgive a woman much; but there was one thing he could not forgive, and that was indifference or hardness where her children were concerned.

But there was neither indifference nor hardness in the face of the woman who was sitting in the shabby little parlour whither he was reluctantly bending his steps. It was a singularly beautiful face still, though worn and haggard; and the eyes were full of a passionate tenderness as they rested on Maisie, and met the gaze of those eager, upturned eyes that resembled them so closely. Not a hard woman certainly, or only hard to herself, for there were lines about the mouth that seemed to tell of a will of iron and an invincible self-control: lines that scarcely harmonised with the love-light in her deep blue eyes, or the soft caressing tones of her exquisitely modulated voice.

And this was Maisie's mother! This beautiful, gracious woman, who looked like a queen, and spoke as Maisie had never heard any one speak before—as she had not dreamed any mere mortal like herself could ever speak! The girl was in an ecstasy of wonder and delight. She did not feel nervous any more; she had not felt nervous save for one brief moment before she had fairly looked in her mother's face, or been clasped in her mother's arms. She was too happy to be nervous; too instinctively sure of her mother's love to be troubled with self-conscious doubts and fears.

"Oh, mother, mother, how I have wanted you!" she cried. "Why have you left me all these years alone?"

"I had no choice, darling. I could not be with you always, and it would have been worse than nothing to meet only to lose each other again. Besides, there were other reasons——I had your father's wishes to consider. You must believe me, Maisie, when I tell you that I acted for the best."

"And now you will never go away any more?"

"No, dear; not exactly that. But when I do go away I shall take you with me."

"Oh, delightful, mother! And when shall we go? And where?" Maisie asked eagerly. She had thrown herself on the floor at her mother's feet, and her arms were resting on her lap as she looked up at her with sparkling eyes. "Oh, I hope it will be ever so far away from Mrs. Jenkins."

"Don't you like her, then?"

"I detest her; and so would you if you'd

lived with her as long as I have. She told me that you and she were schoolfellows, mother!" dropping her voice to an awe-struck whisper. "Surely that can't have been so; there must have been some mistake?"

"No, child; she and I were girls together, and went to the same school; but she never went to another; I did."

"And a very different one, too, I should think. Mother, how would you have felt if you had found me talking my native tongue with Mrs. Jenkins's easy familiarity? Would you have been proud of your daughter?"

"I insisted on her sending you to the best school in the town, my dear, and I had reason to know that it was a very good one. She wrote me word from time to time that you were getting on well, and forwarded me your reports."

"In fact, she was in constant communication with you, while all the time she allowed me to believe you dead," the girl said slowly. "Oh, she never told me so in so many words—I don't mean that; but she meant me to believe it, all the same. Mother, what was her motive?"

"To save herself trouble, I suppose. So long as you thought me dead, you wouldn't ask her troublesome questions; and I had bound her over not to tell you about me for fear of unsettling you."

"But why?—Oh, of course, you knew best; but still — I would rather have known. It would have given me something to look forward to."

"Poor child! Then your life has not been a happy one?"

"It would have been wretched but for the Captain. Oh, mother, you won't mind living within reach of Southbridge, will you? I know he would miss me if we went away, and nothing would ever make him leave the place."

"Yet you tell me he is quite alone here. What can the attraction be to a man of that stamp?" her mother said thoughtfully.

"There is some one he expects to meet here some day—some old friend of whom he has lost sight for years. I don't know why, but the Captain is convinced she will come here, and that if he left Southbridge even for a day he might miss her."

There was a sound of footsteps on the little paved path in the front garden, distinctly audible through the wide-open window; but though Maisie heard it in the pause that followed her last words, she did not recognise it. The Captain never walked with a hesitating, undecided step like that; and the Captain never lingered on the doorstep as though afraid to enter his own house.

"He is a faithful friend, this Captain of yours; and what did you say his name was?"

"I don't think I told you, for nobody ever calls him anything but the Captain; but—— Ah, here he comes!"

And the Captain entered.

But was it indeed the Captain?

He was so changed that Maisie scarcely knew him as he strode into the room, he looked so young, so eager, so full of life and resolution; and he never saw Maisie at all! He just looked past her to her mother, who rose to her feet, pale as death, and stood gazing at him with eyes full of wonder, and love, and something that was almost like fear.

"James!" she cried, in a strained, unnatural voice. "James! Come back from the dead!"

"Marianne, my darling!" and he caught her in his arms in a passionate embrace. "I knew you would come at last!"

But she broke away from him, and stood at a little distance, her stately figure drawn to its full height.

"Wait till you know all!" she said, speaking very low. "I have come back, yes; though without intending it. I thought you were dead. But now—when you have heard my story it will be for you to decide whether I remain."

"What's done's done. I know why you left me, and never blamed you overmuch. It was my fault too, for I should have borne in mind that you were but a child, and wanted gayer company than a weather-beaten old hulk like me. I've been waiting here to tell you so for years, for I made sure you'd drift back to the port you'd first sailed from, and——"

"You know why I left you?" she repeated. "Do you, I wonder? Or do you only know the charitable construction my friends put on my conduct?"—bitterly. "I left you because I was mad with temper and self-will, and craved for the old excitement, the old life you so hated, and from which you had thought to save me. I had grown used to it, you see, and I never dreamed that you really cared so much; your sister took care of that. But I don't blame her — overmuch — either! She's dead now, and she was right enough in thinking I wasn't worthy to be your wife.

Well, I soon repented; even before I found how cruelly I had been slandered to you; and—there was another reason."

For the first time her eyes wandered from her husband's face to where Maisie was standing, pale and bewildered, watching this strange interview with mingled feelings of wonder and dismay. Then she turned to the Captain again, and said passionately:

"I was coming back to you—then—at once—to tell you all; and I heard that your ship had gone down at sea, and every soul was drowned. I thought it was a judgement upon me, James, and it nearly killed me. When I went back to the stage again, it was for your daughter's sake."

"My daughter?"

The Captain's gruff voice shook, and the colour deepened in his weatherbeaten cheek.

"Yes, your daughter. Come here, Maisie, my child—you need not be ashamed to own her, James; she has been brought up far away from her mother, and all the contaminations of a life like mine. I had to work for her, and I worked—in my own way. God knows it was often hard enough! And I denied myself the comfort of seeing her, of hearing her sweet voice, for your sake; as an act of reparation to your memory. What merely physical torture could equal that as a penance, think you? I have tried to make amends. Since she was six months old I have not seen her till to-day. And now—now—James, my work is done. They tell me in all human probability I have only a few months more to live. I meant to have passed them with her, but now—it is for you to decide."

"I have been waiting for you all these years," said the Captain hoarsely, "and, thank God, you've come into port at last! You've had your say, my lass, but don't talk of putting to sea again; for it hurts me, and Maisie and I don't deserve it."

Yes, the Captain's long waiting was over. His conviction had been justified by the result.

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART IV.

ALICE was not very communicative in the dark solitude of the cab. She shut her eyes and leant her tired young head against the corner cushion.

"Don't ask me questions yet," she said. "I am all upside down. I don't understand things rightly, and I haven't decided what to do."

"To do! You surely don't mean to do anything so near your marriage?" shrieked Miss Downing above the rattling wheels. "It was all nonsense about those flowers. Arthur will explain it."

"If it were only the flowers!"

It was of no use to attempt to know more until they were at home. Then Alice would fain have slipped off to her bedroom unquestioned, but her aunt stopped her. "Be sensible, Alice. You always set up for strong common-sense. Don't begin to be jealous so late in the day. The flowers——"

"Oh! the flowers! What matter about the flowers?" cried the girl, stamping her foot. "He has neglected and insulted me the whole night. He sent her my flowers—he gave her my dances——"

"But you danced with Dick when you were engaged to Arthur. I saw you do it."

Alice's face changed a little. "That was only the first dance. He forgot to take me in to supper, and the dance after it, to sit with her in the conservatory. It is no use to make excuses for him."

"You will see it all quite another way in the morning," said Aunt Robina confidently. "Arthur will come first thing to ask what happened—what brought you home so early."

"No, he will not," said Alice, with solemn certainty. "Good night. It is no use talking so late."

She prophesied falsely. When Miss Downing appeared in the breakfast-room next morning, at nine o'clock, Arthur rushed to meet her. He had been waiting since eight, but had requested that nobody should be disturbed.

"How is Alice?" he cried. "Why did she leave last night without telling me?"

"You know best," said Miss Downing shortly, for, however mad it might be of Alice to dream of breaking off her engagement, Arthur had behaved strangely and deserved reproof.

"Surely it was not all about those wretched flowers?" he exclaimed. "Why, how could she possibly believe I sent them to Miss Boyd?"

"Did you not give her some reason to believe it?"

"None whatever. I hardly spoke to Miss Boyd all the evening. Why do you look like that? Do you think I am telling lies? I danced with her when Alice had

deserted me for Freeland, because I had to be civil after that bother about the flowers. I only danced that once with her all the night."

"Alice says you gave her all her dances."

"All her dances! Why, there were none to give her. Alice gave them to Dick, Tom, and Harry until something after supper, and when I went to find her I found our dance was over and she had gone. She gave me the slip at supper-time, and I never beheld her after. I danced with nobody at all, except that first dance with Miss Boyd. I was dead tired all the evening; in fact, I fell asleep in the conservatory, and missed our dance that way; unless she had left before it came on."

"Were you in the conservatory alone?" Miss Downing asked sharply.

"Well, I did go into the conservatories with Miss Boyd. We went to look for Alice. It was hardly complimentary to Miss Boyd, for I fell asleep there and awoke with a most awful headache, and very stiff and cold, and quite alone. I stumbled along to find you all, but nearly everybody was gone. Lady Strange looked so queer, and was so stand-offish, as if she thought I was drunk, though I had not tasted anything all night. Strange looked queer, too, and was uncordial. Somebody —Frank Sandys, I think—said that Alice had gone home ill, so I hurried off thinking that might be why they looked so solemn, but it was two o'clock, and I could not come here to ask."

"I will tell Alice you are here," said Miss Downing, leaving the room. "She may not be up yet."

To her surprise, Alice was not only up, but dressed—and dressed for travelling in hat and cloak. A strapped dress-basket and a large milliner's basket stood in the middle of the floor. The room, so dainty and bright of wont, looked desolate; stray scraps of packing paper, ends of string, and some luggage labels lay about the floor, and all the pretty, homely nicknacks of daily use were gone from the dressing-table, leaving it squalid in its bareness. Alice looked up from buttoning her boots to say:

"Breakfast ready? I'm going up to town to see this dress altered."

"Surely that is not necessary?" cried Miss Downing, relieved that there still seemed to be some contemplated use for a white satin dress. "Arthur is downstairs." Alice frowned. "He is so distressed. He heard you were ill last night."

"Then please send my breakfast to me here."

"You silly child, why? Go downstairs at once and make it up. You are quite, quite mistaken. He has explained everything to me. It was all your fault. He is in the most dreadful state of grief. Don't be rash, Alice, and do in a moment what can't be undone in a lifetime."

"I am not going to do anything. It is all done," she said; but her voice softened. "I don't know how he can explain things. I thought I would go to the Kinnairds for a day or two, and make my dress the excuse. I will send a telegram to Cousin Millicent. They are at Colonel Kinnaird's, in Oxford Terrace, for a week or two before—going to Norway." Miss Downing's heart sank again at the pause. The Kinnairds had been going to take Pyncholk and the wedding on their northward way. "Their own house in South Kensington is all upside down—drains wrong. It would be better not to see Arthur."

But she spoke so uncertainly that Miss Downing said coaxingly: "Just run down to see him now, and you will find that it is all right."

Reluctantly Alice went, and Miss Downing waited. She would give them ten minutes. It really couldn't take longer. She was hungry, and ten minutes seemed very long indeed.

She went and coughed gently at the dining-room door before she opened it. To her surprise, there sat Alice alone, composedly pouring out coffee.

"I didn't wait," she said. "It is getting cold, and I have not much time. The train goes at 10.15."

"Where is Arthur?"

"Gone to the Rectory, Mary says. I have not seen him."

If Miss Downing was astonished before, she was confounded now. She was a very simple-minded person, and could not be expected to see through a stone wall. A broken-hearted, forsaken maiden who could eat her breakfast was an enigma past her powers of solution. Arthur was certainly behaving very badly indeed, and though it was impossible that the quarrel could continue to the length of ending the engagement, he deserved punishment, and Alice had her dignity and that of her relatives to maintain.

"Please order the cab from the 'Strange Arms,'" said Alice, "and tell Mary to leave this telegram at the post-office as she passes, and lose no time."

Miss Downing went to find Mary, and asked her distressfully:

"Why did Mr. Knollys go to the Rectory? Did he say anything?"

"He went just after you left the room, ma'am," said Mary. "He was talking to himself first, for I was just coming into the room with the eggs, and he didn't see me. He jumped up, saying, 'That's it—that will put it all right in a jiffy.' Then he told me to tell you he would be back in a minute.

"I think that telegram need not go yet," said Miss Downing. "You might order the cab. We can send it away if it isn't wanted."

But the cab came, and Arthur did not. Alice got in, with a fixed, white face, and said nothing. As she passed the Rectory he came flying over the lawn, but the driver was looking the other way at some cattle, and Alice did not stop him. When her boxes were being lifted down at the station, Arthur rushed up, breathless.

"For Heaven's sake, Alice, where are you going?" he panted.

"To town," she replied, watching the descent of her wedding-dress into a truck.

"Why? Are you mad? Surely you do not believe——"

"I have not time for explanations," she said coldly. "I will write. Please don't make a scene."

"Explanations! What is there to explain? Oh, my dearest, I have come to explain."

She paused.

"I went to the Rectory. I asked to see the address on the box the flowers came in."

"Well?"

But there was hope in her eyes, though her voice was constrained to hauteur.

"It was certainly in my own writing, but I saw at once what had happened; I wrote her name instead of yours in a fit of abstraction."

"How odd!"

The bell rang, and she moved away. He followed, saying:

"Don't you understand? I was buried in my work—my head was full of it——"

"Please don't keep me. People are looking at us," she interrupted. "I must take my ticket."

She turned deliberately into the queue at the ticket-office, whither he certainly could not follow to plead. He waited in suppressed anguish until she emerged, last of the line, her ticket between her teeth while she fastened her purse.

"I can't wait," she cried indistinctly, as if through the ticket.

They were already slamming carriage doors. She gave him not another glance, but sprang into a carriage whose door was held open for her by a porter, and in another second she was out of sight.

He stood staring after the receding train like a lost soul gazing at heaven's closed gates.

"The girl must be bewitched," he said presently, aloud.

"Or you are, Knollys," said a voice behind, recalling him to actualities.

He turned with a start and recognised Dick Freeland.

"I beg your pardon," said the latter, laughing. "You looked as if you were enchanted to the spot, regardless of rushing trucks. Your nerves are out of order, dear boy — too much devotion to art. I am running north for a few days' shooting. Suppose you come with me, now you're off duty here — picture finished, I mean," hastily, seeing he had put his foot into something. "You look as if you wanted a holiday."

"I want nothing of the sort," cried Arthur angrily. "I have engagements here, and I am going off for a holiday presently, as you know."

"Oh, I am glad; I thought——well, good-bye; this is my train," as another rushed up from the opposite direction.

"What did the fellow mean?" pondered Arthur. "What does Alice mean? What do they all mean?"

He left the station, and returned to seek light from Miss Downing.

"Has Alice thrown me over for Freeland?" he demanded. "Why are they all treating me as if I were played out? What have I done?"

Miss Downing had been turning matters over in her mind. Alice was extremely obstinate, and there was no doubt Arthur had behaved very badly indeed. The only reasonable explanation of his conduct, even from his own account, was that he had had too much wine, which made things considerably worse. He had fallen asleep in the conservatory, and the Stranges had looked coldly upon him after. Men always say they have "taken nothing" under those circumstances. He had often had a curious dazed expression of late. He had accounted for it by overwork and irregular meals. Was it not too well known that artists kept themselves going by tobacco and spirits when they were too busy to eat proper

meals? Alice would be well rid of such a husband, and Dick Freeland would come forward again and be a much better match.

So he got no comfort from his intended aunt-in-law. She knew nothing, she declared, except that Alice had gone to town to see a dressmaker. She had noticed herself that they seemed to be on bad terms last night. It was very unpleasant about the flowers. He could not expect Alice to be pleased that his head had been so much fuller of another girl than of herself, that he had written her very name instead of Alice's. As for Mr. Freeland, he had always admired Alice. Arthur knew better than Miss Downing did what reason he might have for qualms. Alice would, no doubt, write to him. Yes, Miss Downing would of course give him Alice's London address—Fifty, Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park. There was no reason why he should not write to her; indeed, every reason why he should—the sooner the better.

The last words Arthur took as a hint that Miss Downing had not time for farther discussion of the subject. She wrote the address on an envelope and gave it to him. He went at once to his inn to write.

Sheet after sheet he covered and tore up. He could not explain himself. Every exculpation read improbable, weak, and self-accusatory. He would go first for a long walk to clear his brain. He had nothing else to do, his picture being finished.

He walked far into the country and lost his way. There came a drenching storm of rain, and he had to wait at a little farm-house for two mortal hours. He did not reach Pyncholk until seven o'clock. The September day was over, but the rising full moon and the twilight made places and figures distinctly visible. As he passed the Rectory garden, he was hailed by a friendly voice:

"Knollys, is that you? Come in and dine with us. We are quite alone, and we hear you are also. We will cheer you up for the loss of the lady. Never mind your clothes."

He was tired, and hungry, and lonely, and he accepted the Rector's invitation. Mrs. Waterton was coming downstairs as they went in together, handsome and stately, in black velvet. She received him with a little stiffness. She, too, seemed to be injured in the matter of those baneful flowers; her guest had been placed in an awkward position. It did not occur to him that she was vexed with her husband for bringing in a guest at literally the last minute, when there was barely enough dinner to go round.

The dinner-gong had sounded before he appeared in the drawing-room, cleaned and brushed as far as available resources would permit. The Rector at once gave his arm to Miss Boyd, and led the way to the dining-room, and Arthur followed with his hostess, his artistic soul cheered by the contemplation of Miss Boyd's graceful back and shoulders, draped in black lace.

"Lydia is going away to-morrow," said Mrs. Waterton in an undertone. "I am so sorry."

'Indeed!" he answered, slightly interested. It was a pity she had not gone two days earlier. He disliked her with a perfect rage of dislike. Was she not at the bottom of all this trouble with Alice?—through no fault of hers, perhaps—but she was there all the same.

He was glad that Mrs. Waterton stuck to the past fashion of tall table plants. Her reason to-night for filling up her table with palms and bushy ferns was to conceal the scantiness of provisions. His reason for liking arboreal decoration was that he could see very little of Miss Boyd, who sat opposite. She was really offensively plain. He addressed all his conversation to his host and hostess. He discoursed quite fluently and warmly on the Parish Councils Bill and its probable effects upon Church interests, and listened with deep interest to Mrs. Waterton's views of somebody's "perfectly fiendish wickednesses." He never read newspapers, so was a listener perfectly ready to accept any views which were presented to him by such experts. Miss Boyd apparently took even less interest in politics, for she never spoke, and was left altogether out of the conversation, except when Mrs. Waterton said:

"You have been so long out of England, Lydia, you must get these things up;" and "That very nice young Smith who was introduced to you last night is County Councillor for this place. If they were all like him!"

All at once Arthur found himself physically weary of his pains to avoid her eyes, and he looked straight through the thickly-foliaged plant between to meet them and defy them. He was quite mortified to find that she was not looking at him at all, but with smiling attention at Mr. Waterton, who was now discoursing of anarchist outrages. To his surprise she looked almost handsome. Her cheeks were a little flushed, and her eyes were large and

quite dark. The pupils could contract and dilate like a cat's. He watched her for some moments with attention and impunity. He believed she was avoiding his eyes in her turn. She had a splendid throat and bust. What a pity she could not find a model to sit for a new face! Why would she not look at him? She was offended, angry. It was not his fault that that never-exhausted mistake was made about the bouquet, but he should have turned the incident off with more tact. He should not have let her feel disappointed and humiliated. That was Alice's fault, who ought to have seen at once how the accident had happened and been generous enough to let Miss Boyd enjoy her fictitious honours. If Alice had not betrayed him by her demonstrative anger, all would have ended happily. It was very hard on Miss Boyd, who was really the only innocent one of the three. He blamed himself, of course, for his stupidity, but not so much as he blamed Alice, whose head was not muddled by work and worry, and who should have seen at once and been prompt to act gracefully. He must put himself right with Miss Boyd. He did not like to think she would leave Pyncholk to-morrow with such an uncomfortable parting impression. . . .

"—do you remember, Mr. Knollys? Was it in ninety-two or ninety-three?"

Was what? He looked as if he had been caught reading Miss Boyd's letters, he gave such a guilty start, hearing himself thus pointedly referred to. Ninety-two or ninety-three what?

"Ninety-two," he said hastily. "I think——"

Then Mrs. Waterton rose, and he gathered his wits together in time to open the door.

"Don't stay all night discussing Parish Councils," said Miss Boyd, smiling as she passed him.

Then she was not irremediably offended! It was very kind and large-minded of her to speak to him so. In the revulsion of feeling he quite liked her. He would have followed her at once to the drawing-room had not custom, that most potent of forces, held him back.

"Why has Mr. Knollys come to-night?" Miss Boyd asked of her hostess when they were seated by the drawing-room fire with screens and footstools.

"Because he must always bungle and blunder, and do what he isn't wanted to do," said Mrs. Waterton inhospitably. "It was most provoking of Henry to ask him. I saw he dared not eat lest he should clear the larder. A spoonful of soup, a cutlet, and half a partridge. What is that for a healthy young man?"

"He did not seem in good appetite," said Lydia. "He wouldn't mind. Lovers who have been left by their sweethearts shouldn't want to eat. He is nervous and ill."

"Perhaps he came to see you," said Mrs. Waterton sarcastically. "He stared at you enough."

"How could he come to see me if he is engaged to that girl?"

"I shouldn't be surprised if that is off. It was a very hurried sort of thing. I always thought she did it to pique Dick Freeland into proposing to her. Perhaps they settled matters all round last night. It would be much better for her to marry a well-to-do man, whom we all know, than an obscure artist."

"I should prefer the artist," said Miss Boyd reflectively. "Not this particular one, of course, so you need not look shocked. I know it would not be proper to say it. I ought to say that I infinitely prefer liberty to work for my own living—but I don't."

"But, my dear, you seem so—successful!" stammered the rectoress, amazed. She did not like to say "so rich." Then she thought Miss Boyd had, perhaps, lost money on the Stock Exchange. Her appearance was so very unlike that of a person who had as yet worked for her living.

"I have made a good deal of money, but I find it difficult to keep going without taking a partner."

Mrs. Waterton was old-fashioned: a person who considered money-making by a woman a delicate and secret matter, to be pitied but not enquired into, like some shameful family trouble. She was very much astonished that Lydia Boyd should be concerned in business; taking a partner sounded like something in the City; but women are so very astonishing nowadays. Nothing should stagger one in modern developement. If Dukes' sons might go into trade, why not women? One did not set old-world ideas more violently awry than the other.

"It is so clever of you," she said vaguely.

Miss Boyd did not answer at once. She was thoughtfully contemplating the hot heart of the fire. When she looked up to speak, Mrs. Waterton had fallen into her usual little after-dinner snooze.

Almost immediately after, Arthur came in.

"Mr. Waterton has letters to write for

the night mail," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper in honour of his hostess's slumbers.

"I have a letter to write, too," said Miss Boyd, rising softly as she spoke. "Will you kindly carry the small lamp for me into the back drawing-room?"

He obeyed. As soon as he set the lamp down on the writing-table and saw paper and pens, he remembered that he, too, had a letter to write.

"I am afraid I must go home," he said hesitatingly. "I also have letters——"

He stopped. What if he had lost the address? He felt in his pockets. He pulled out two letters, then an envelope addressed in a thin, feminine hand.

"I thought I had lost it," he cried, looking up to Miss Boyd with laughing relief.

She looked at him steadily. The laugh died out of his eyes in a great awe. She was glorious as she stood there in the dim room, outside the circle of light confined within the radius of the thick shade; dim and vague herself, her white neck and arms gleaming from the blackness of her dress, and her strange eyes shining like the jewels round her throat, all the faint outer rays of light gathered into their lucent depths.

"Don't go yet," she said gently. Her voice was sweet and vibrant as a reed. "Write the letter here."

"Any message for Wedderburn, Georgina?" asked the Rector, waking up his wife. "I am sending John to catch the night mail."

"Quick—your name—in full," said Miss Boyd in the back drawing-room. Then she appeared in the hall closing a letter. "This for the post, please," she said to the groom, giving it into his hands, and returning to the back drawing-room as she came by the door opening upon the hall.

"What has become of Knollys?" asked the Rector, having dismissed John and returned to his wife.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Waterton sleepily. "I don't think he came up. Where is Lydia?"

"She came into the hall with a letter—ah! here she comes—and Knollys, too!" as they emerged from behind the portière, Arthur blinking, as if he too had been enjoying a post-prandial forty winks.

"I believe Mr. Knollys has been asleep all the time I was writing my letter in the morning-room," she said, laughing. "I found him as sound as a top. After pretending he had letters to write, too!"

"Well, we must have some whist now," said the Rector.

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER.

WITH ALMANACK FOR 1895.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

PRICE 6d.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	WITHIN THE CASTLE WARD	1
II.	ON BOARD THE "INCONSTANT"	5
III.	A SECRET MISSION	7
IV.	THE FANCY DRESS BALL	8
V.	STOPPED ON THE HIGHWAY	10
VI.	THE ADVENTURER AT HOME	12
VII.	AN INVITATION TO NORMANDY	14
VIII.	AT THE OLD CHATEAU	16
IX.	HUNTING THE WILD BOAR	20
X.	IN A SECRET PRISON	22
XI.	A TRUE LOVER'S KNOT	23
	AUTUMN LEAVES—	
	WORTH A GUINEA	25
	AN UNSEEN PRESENCE	32
	"TO-MORROW WILL BE FRIDAY"	38
	AN AUTUMN MANŒUVRE	42
	WANTED, A SKIPPER	46
	TABLE OF EVENTS, 1893-94	51
	OBITUARY	57
	CALENDAR FOR 1895.	

PRICE 6d

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

CHAPTER I. WITHIN THE CASTLE WARD.

LADY TYRREL'S fancy ball promised to be one of the events of the season. It was fixed for the close of the Ascot week, when all the fine people had spread themselves in temporary quarters over the heaths and glades of Windsor Forest, and it would form an appropriate finish to a very brilliant period. Sir Charles Tyrrel was not a young man. He disapproved of betting, and his principles, as the head of a great City firm, were known to be austere; but his wife always got together a distinguished party for the race week, for "The Woodlands" was a capital house, furnished with a regular cordon bleu in the way of a chef, and a cellar of the highest reputation. And as the house party embraced a Royal Duke, and all the best people were promised for the ball, naturally enough the smaller fishes were eager enough to be included in the swim. The interest aroused in the fixture had spread as far as the Royal Borough of Windsor, and it had caused debate in the mess-room of the Royal Life Guards who were quartered there, and who were invited "en masse." The invitations had specified "uniform or fancy dress," but it was felt that simply to go in uniform would be rather flat, while if fancy dress were adopted, some kind of unity in costume and grouping should mark the detachment.

"Something quiet and effective in black and white," suggested an æsthetic captain.

"Why not a nigger troupe with bones and tambourines?" proposed rosy Lieutenant Bob, who had just joined from Sandhurst and Eton.

"And hide your charming blushes, Bob. That won't do," cried a senior. "Besides, none of the girls would come near us for fear of being blacked."

"Brigands, then," said Bob, with enthusiasm.

"You're too fat, Bob, like Tracy Tupman."

The discussion was adjourned; but the same perplexity was disturbing many minds, among others that of a pretty little woman who, at the same moment, was

breakfasting in a house-boat on the river, a charming house-boat in white and gold, bearing the legend "The Inconstant," anchored not far from Surley Hall. Madame D'Antin was as trim and dainty as a Dresden shepherdess, with the same lovely complexion of rose-pink and enamel, and all this was so naturally suggestive of a costume to match, completed by a crook and a basket of pink roses. Such was the opinion of her husband, a dark, sardonic-looking man, who was reading his Paris "Figaro" on the other side of the dainty breakfast service. But Madame did not care for such an obvious arrangement.

"I would go as Titania," she said hesitatingly, "if you would be Oberon."

"Bah!" replied the husband disdainfully. "No, Julie, don't let us bracket ourselves in any case. You have your own rôle. Leave me to mine."

"And that means baccarat or poker," said Julie to herself as Monsieur D'Antin, lighting a cigarette, buried himself in some abstruse calculations in which a betting book and Racing Calendar were alternately consulted. Julie yawned. "You are very amusing, Ernest," she said peevishly. "But never mind, Charles Tyrrel is coming presently, and then I shall no longer be dull."

D'Antin looked up with an approving glance.

"That is right, Julie, make the most of the sprightly youth. We shall want him by-and-by."

The slightest shock in the world, no greater, indeed, than the vigorous double knock inflicts upon mansions founded on the solid earth, here gave notice that some visitor was coming aboard. It was actually the sprightly youth who had just been in question, a brown, sunburnt young fellow with a frank and pleasant countenance, who was graciously received by Madame D'Antin.

"And you come just à propos," she cried, "to tell me what to wear for your step-mother's ball!"

Young Tyrrel was a little embarrassed at the responsibility thrust upon him. Madame D'Antin would be charming in any costume she might appear in. But he had a favour to ask, and his embarrassment increased in the asking—would Madame D'Antin be so angelically good as to take May Wyvern with her to the ball? Madame D'Antin hesitated, a little chilled at the request. But looking towards her husband, who still seemed immersed in his books, he raised his eyes in a quick glance which said "yes" in the plainest terms.

But there were difficulties in the way. Miss Wyvern lived with her grandfather, a one-armed veteran, one of the old Military Knights of Windsor, in the lower ward of the Royal Castle. A fine old soldier was Major Wyvern.

In years he seem'd, but not impair'd by years.

But the vigour of his intellect had retained some equally vigorous prejudices, and the very name of Tyrrel was obnoxious to him. Sir Charles was no better disposed to the old soldier. Some secret cause put these two men, who were old enough to have known better, in violent antagonism. Had they quarrelled at the parish vestry, or was it some unlucky speculation that rankled in the breast of one or the other? Charles did not know. But it was very unlucky, for May was the dearest creature in the world, and he, Charles, loved her most devotedly.

This confession, made after Monsieur D'Antin had left, was received by Madame D'Antin with slightly scornful sympathy.

"You are very foolish young people, for you are entirely dependent on your father, are you not? But your profession! You were an attaché when we knew you in Paris."

"Such is my miserable vocation," said Charles dolefully; "an attaché, unattached and unpaid—a cancelled postage stamp with the gum off."

"But, my poor dégommé, you may be employed again. Still, it is not a profession to live upon; and May, she has just enough fortune to buy shoes and stockings, and an occasional frock."

"And delightful shoes and charming frocks they are," sighed Charles.

Madame D'Antin laughed half contemptuously.

"My poor Charles, you are indeed far gone. Well, you must be helped, I suppose, to your own undoing. But there is another difficulty. We may elude the Major, but how shall we evade Zamora?"

Zamora was an African, black as night, and May's faithful slave and watchful guardian, vigilant dragon and patient beast of burden, all in one. A quiet, taciturn young woman in a general way, but a flame of fire when aroused. She was small and well-made, and came direct from some tribe in the far interior of a finer mould and lither frame than the negroes of the coast, and of a higher mental calibre.

If Zamora disapproved, the thing would seem impossible.

"But Zamora is our friend!" cried Charles. "She is delighted with the notion of the ball, and she only longs to see it herself. Couldn't you manage that, dear Madame?"

"Wait!" said Madame D'Antin, fixing her eyes on some imaginary object. "Yes, I have it," she said, after a pause. "I will go as Madame Dubarry, and Zamora will be my black page. White satin and diamonds, and my fair doll's face, with Zamora—the page, you know—in red and black, and a yellow turban wreathed with pearls. Will not that be effective? I will order the dresses at once."

"And May?" asked Charles, as Madame D'Antin flew to her writing-table, and began to dash off a telegram.

"Oh, we will arrange something for her," said Madame D'Antin abstractedly. "And now, Charlie, paddle yourself ashore and send off this telegram for me. And come back to luncheon, for I expect May will be here, and we can settle everything."

Having executed his commission at the post-office, Charles Tyrrel strolled lazily up Hill Street, looking upward at the "hundred steps" if perchance he might catch a glimpse of the flowing robe of his charming May descending from the castled steep to the world below. But he saw nothing. If he had been endowed with preternaturally acute vision, if the high towers and crenellated walls had been made transparent for him, he would have seen his sweetheart reclining on a grassy slope in front of the quaint red-brick dwellings of the old Knights, engrossed in the pages of some novel or story, while her grandfather, seated on a bench just above, smoked his briar-root placidly and conversed with a visitor from town. The visitor was a man approaching middle age, pale, with light sandy whiskers, and a pleasant, humorous expression in features otherwise insignificant. This was Cousin Perkins—Harry Perkins of the outer Bar, who was the old Major's confidential adviser, and May's trustee, humble servant, and well-wisher; the last to a degree that was only indifferently rediprocated by the young lady in question.

"I don't feel quite easy," said the Major, in a low voice, "about this Madame D'Antin. As Julie Fouchet I knew her family very well, connected with the fabrique in Normandy — Protestant, precise, philanthropic, rich—but Julie married seems a bird of another feather."

"Rather a gay kind of bird, indeed," said Perkins, in the quiet undertone that was natural to him; "but I think she's all right. People laugh at her because she is enamoured of her husband, who does not seem flattered by her attentions. And if she flirts a good deal, it is all to bring the legitimate one to her feet."

"Well, that's to her credit, perhaps," said the Major indulgently. But what was to be said about the man himself?

Well, Mr. Perkins admitted that he was of honourable lineage. The Château D'Antin, now a tumble-down old ruin, was still in his possession, and he had inherited a modest paternal fortune, which he had spent in a few years of gaiety in Paris. Then, quite ruined, he had gone to Africa in the company of Brassica, the great explorer, and strange to say had come back with another fortune some years after, acquired, said rumour, by traffic in ivory, or perhaps slaves. Before that was completely gone, he had met and captivated Mademoiselle Fouchet, the rich heiress, whose parents reluctantly consented to their union. Between them they had made the money fly, and rumour had it that not long ago the D'Antins were seriously embarrassed; but since then their affairs seemed to be re-established. "But a rumour has reached me," added Perkins, in a whisper, "an indefinite, perhaps baseless rumour, that Monsieur now ekes out his income as a secret diplomatic agent—in other words, a spy."

May had not been so immersed in her story that she had not caught a word or two of the conversation from the first, and becoming interested in its progress, she had even caught the purport of Cousin Perkins's last guarded utterance.

"I think it is very mean of you," she interposed hotly, "to say such things of my friends. Monsieur D'Antin is no more a spy than you are—perhaps not so much!"

This was hard on Mr. Perkins, who knew himself suspected of having carried information to the Major as to May's movements, a deed of which he was quite innocent. He was really hurt, but scorned to make any reprisals on May, whose brown eyes had flashed fire upon him for a moment. And after all he had rather that she looked at him angrily as now, than indifferently, as was her general wont; as if he were a haystack or a field of cabbages. But the Major put his hand on the other's shoulder deprecatingly.

"She's but a schoolgirl, Harry, and talks like one; you must not mind her."

"Oh, I like her for sticking up for her friends," said Perkins drily. "I only wish she counted me among them. But what about the ball, Blossie"—an old pet name among them—"are you going?"

"What? Tyrrel's ball do you mean?" interposed the Major angrily. "Do you think she would go to the house of her father's enemy—the man who took away his reputation and, I believe, his life?"

"Well, I think you are mistaken there, said Perkins. "As a lawyer, I should say there is no evidence of one or the other. The man's character stands high, his sovereign rewards his successful career with a baronetcy. Major, you should bury the hatchet and offer the olive-branch."

"May I never meet my son in heaven if I do!" said the Major fiercely.

Mr. Perkins might have rejoined that to cherish unforgiving feelings was not the approved way of reaching that desired bourne. But he refrained from any rejoinder, lest he should cause the Major to repeat the story, so long familiar to him, of young Wyvern's fate. But as all the world does not share his knowledge, we may listen for a few moments to the old Knight of Windsor's tale.

The Major's son Hugh was, it may be premised, a great explorer. Not one of those who dash through a continent like a thunderbolt, and hurry home to write a book about it; he devoted his life to his work, taking the business in a leisurely way, and making friends with the people of the country wherever he went. He had married a wife who shared his enterprising spirit, and one little girl had been born to them in the African wilds where they had made their home. It was in a pleasant region of the highlands about the head waters of the Congo, inhabited by a friendly tribe of blacks, who cultivated a fertile and well-watered soil. The climate was genial and healthy; the scenery of park and forest, with a border of snowy peaks; the district abounded with game. The Wyverns thought they had found an earthly paradise, and raising a stockaded camp in a sheltered nook, they remained there several years.

One day Hugh was hunting in the forest when he came upon the track of a slave-hunting party that was making its way through the forest with a string of recently captured negroes. Following at a distance he presently heard piercing cries of terror and distress, and saw a young girl who had evidently attempted an escape, pursued by a huge brown fellow of the mixed Arab and negro race. Hugh threw himself between them; the Arab drew his long knife, they closed together, and a desperate struggle ensued. The Arab was as lithe and slippery as a serpent, and had already wounded his adversary with a stroke of his knife, and Hugh was fast failing from loss of blood, when the girl, who had watched the combat from a little distance, caught up the gun which Hugh had dropped, and fired it full into the chest of the Arab as he knelt on the body of his now prostrate foe.

There was no time to be lost, and Hugh led the way along secret tracks which he had been shown by the friendly blacks, through the otherwise impenetrable jungle that guarded the frontiers of the happy land. They were not pursued, and the black girl followed submissively to the camp, where she was kindly received by Mrs. Wyvern.

The girl was Zamora, as she was afterwards named, and she devoted herself with grateful affection to the service of the Wyverns, and especially of picanini May.

At that time there was another white man in the camp, a young fellow whom Hugh had picked up on the coast. He had left a wife and child in England, but he proved to be a very dissolute fellow, and discontented as well, and Hugh had often threatened to get rid of him. At last a gross insult he offered to Zamora, put Hugh out of patience; he turned the young fellow out of the camp and bade him begone. He had not intended to be taken at his word, but expected to be offered his submission, and so reinstate him; but the young man, it seemed, was of a harder texture than that came to, and was said to have joined a party of Arab traders, on their way to the coast.

As to what happened subsequently, Zamora was the only witness. It seemed that in some way or other the Arab slave-hunters had ascertained the cause of their comrade's violent death, and had determined on blood revenge. Anyhow, the camp was attacked by surprise, and all its inmates slaughtered, excepting only Zamora and little May, who escaped, as is evident from their present appearance on the scene.

But what had Sir Charles Tyrrel, the respected baronet and millionaire, to do with this story of rash enterprise and its common result? Why, only that in the Major's imagination he was identical with one Tyrrel who returned from the West

Coast of Africa some fifteen years ago, bringing the news of the slaughter of the Wyvern party. According to his account Captain Wyvern had brought the attack on himself by outrages committed on native females, and that account being generally credited certainly checked all sympathy with the victims, and obviated the necessity of any further investigation. Was there nothing else? Why, yes, there was the canvas bag in which May's fortune had been brought home; scrawled upon this as if with a finger dipped in blood—a dark, dull purple now—were the words: "Tyrrel × Traitor." On that red cross Major Wyvern had sworn a solemn oath. He had wept over it too, sad, hopeless tears.

"I am too old and feeble to be an avenger of blood."

CHAPTER II. ON BOARD THE "INCONSTANT."

It was very well for an old man to cherish thoughts of vengeance; but quite other sentiments actuated his granddaughter, who was determined to believe the best of her lover and his belongings. She needed no love philtre to blind her to the claims of vengeance; she had never felt any desire to shorten her lover's span of life. From the very first she had looked upon him with delight, and no one had warned her she was treading on forbidden ground.

It had all been the affair of a moment. Each was in a punt, rounding a sharp turn in the river, unconscious of each other's existence, and she at least

> In maiden meditation, fancy free.

There was a sudden shock. Two punts had collided, and May would have been thrown into the water but for the dexterity of the other punter—why should gamblers monopolise the epithet?—who caught her, restored her balance, and recovered her pole. She rewarded him with a grateful look; a look may mean anything—but this was such a look!—from deep brown eyes, full and liquid, with long curved lashes that seemed to barb the glance and fix it for ever. To this add the charm of a low, smooth brow crowned with an aureole of gold, or a golden bronze, finely carved nostrils, and parted lips, coral-red, with the gleam of pearls within, and complete the spell with the grace of a lithe and slender yet well-rounded form, and there was a young man's undoing ready made.

"She's the flower of the river," said an old fisherman to Charles, who lost no time in making his perquisitions, "and I should say she is the flower of the Castle too, for she lives up there, all among the old stattys and monuments."

And so she was; the rose of the cloister, the blossom of the lower ward, the fair living model of all that had charmed in the past within that haunted circle of grey walls and towers. Among the war-worn veterans who, in peaceful retirement, awaited the summons of the last trumpet-call, she appeared as a radiant figure recalling all the sweetness—and with that the sorrow that lingers in hearts still young, though the outward frame may be sere and yellow enough—of earlier, happier days. Some of the veterans remembered her as a child when she first made her appearance, a wild but winning little creature, with the black girl who had saved her from the massacre in which her father and mother had perished, and brought her through innumerable perils to civilised regions. And the pair, although warmly welcomed by Major Wyvern, were yet a source of a good deal of embarrassment. But they did not come quite empty-handed. At the last moment, when escape for the white people was impossible, young Wyvern had entrusted to Zamora a little bag of treasure, diamonds, indeed, of great size and brilliance, which the girl had preserved intact. These were sold and realised sufficient to provide for the education of the two girls; for Zamora utterly refused to be parted from her dear Missie May, and she was received as a boarder in the French school to which May was sent. Here she would learn nothing, but picked up a little broken French to mix with her broken English, her broken Arabic, and an unknown tongue, which she had at first spoken with "Missie May," but which soon became a dead language to that little lassie.

But all this was an old story now, and May's African experiences had faded from her mind, if they had ever made any distinct impression there. The supreme consideration now was the young lover who had appeared upon the scene at the critical moment. How quickly the days had flown since then, and what charming ingenuity Charles had displayed in finding opportunities for their meeting! Flower shows and regattas were neutral zones where these hereditary enemies could meet, and enjoy sweet, half-stolen interviews, and there were festivities sometimes in the

cloisters where May was often a guest, to which Charles would contrive to be invited. And when they had waltzed each other out of breath, they would restore themselves in the sweet air of the secluded terrace, where the town lay sleeping below, and lights twinkled here and there on the river.

But the great piece of good fortune that awaited the young people was the arrival of the D'Antins with their house-boat, for Madame D'Antin, though older than May, had befriended her at school, and was delighted to meet her again. As for Charles, he was an old friend and had known them in Paris. But Julie was not quite so cordial when she discovered the attachment between the pair. She grudged them opportunities of meeting, and altogether had shown herself, in May's opinion, "rather horrid" in the matter.

And on this especial day, although Julie had besought her friend to "fly" to her, in time for luncheon, yet she had added, "I shall be strictly alone, and have things most important to say." And that meant only a scolding and no Charles.

"I will stay at home and be civil to Mr. Perkins," said May to herself.

And then Zamora appeared from the town, her comely face in ebony and ivory lighted up with smiles. She had a basket of beautiful fruit on her arm, and a lovely bunch of flowers. May sprang towards her, for she looked as if she were charged with pleasant news.

"Hush!" said Zamora softly, with a glance towards the Major's grizzled head. "Him come! Him send pretty flowers! Him waiting now, bym-bye, at de ole boat-house."

It was a blissful little voyage that, from the old boat-house; a voyage of discovery with the "Inconstant" as the ultimate goal, but with much to be arrived at in their leisurely progress. Beginning in the toss and turmoil of the wide reach, all glittering and dancing in the sunshine, with boats shooting to and fro, Eton major in racing eights cutting through the water majestically indifferent to the fate of anything in the way, Eton minor bucketing along in any description of tub that would float, tumbling head over heels in eagerness to get along, but getting along all the same. And the Brocas clump appears, reminding one of palms in the desert, so bare are the neighbouring fields; and Athens further on, with a Parthenon of spring-boards and a moving frieze of long-legged Etonians, hopping continually into the water, with acrobatic flourishes. And from every point of vantage rise gaunt figures in tattered garments who eagerly offer themselves as ready to "tow your honour's" boat for a trifle. And the stream being strong, and the river a trifle dull just here, Charles threw out a line to the nearest hand, and the boat sped merrily along. And it was pleasanter after all to sit under the same sunshade, and talk confidentially in soft accents, than to be half a boat's length apart and communicate ideas in hurried gasps.

But while they were hurried along, as pleased with each other as Antony and Cleopatra in their gilded barge on old Nile, a shout was heard from a boat coming rapidly down the stream: "Why, it's May! Hullo, May! Lend us your gamp, it's so blazing hot!" It was a little ark full of small Eton boys who were enjoying their half-holiday aquatically, and the speaker was Perkins minimus, who was lolling in the stern, and alternately slanging his crew or chaffing other boats with charming vivacity.

"The horrid little wretch!" said May disconsolately, as the ark disappeared in the distance. "He is sure to give a ridiculous garbled account of meeting us to his uncle Henry."

"And what has his uncle Henry got to do with it?" asked Charles jealously.

"He is my cousin," replied May, "and a kind of guardian. Oh, not a bit grumpy, but very nice and kind; very kind indeed, for he is constantly coming to see my grandfather. Old? Oh, no, hardly middle-aged, and very popular in society, and that makes it all the kinder that he comes to our quiet little cottage to sit with the ancients."

"Very much so," replied Charles drily. "But, May, I should like to come and sit with your grandfather too, if you were there, you know."

"Oh, you must not think of it," said May, in a frightened voice. "He has the most dreadful, unreasonable prejudice against your family."

"It is the Montagus and Capulets over again," said Charles, "but we will make a better ending of it, May darling, will we not?"

May said she did not know, and she spoke truly enough, for out of the comedy of human life how often stalks black Tragedy, sudden and inexorable, to make an end of the show!

But heedless of any probable storms that might be brewing they floated happily on, now lingering in the shade, anchored to the gnarled roots of some spreading tree, or paddling lazily along where the ripples danced in the sunbeams. True to her name the "Inconstant" had left her moorings, and that was an excuse for lingering here and there—but the fragrant odour of cutlets revealed the lurking-place of the house-boat, and May, as she sprang on board at one, laughingly assumed the offensive by accusing Julie of a design to hide herself from her friends.

Other visitors had come on board; and among them Prince Paulovski, a political exile, but also a man devoted to chemical research, and whose hobby was photography. And the latter at the moment was Madame D'Antin's favourite pursuit, and the Prince was delighted to have such an apt and pleasing pupil, to whom he imparted the most recondite secrets of the art. But from the moment of May's arrival her friend could talk of nothing but the ball, and of the costume in which she was to appear. But it must be correct, absolutely correct, in every detail, and where could she get accurate drawings—not simply of the period, her dressmaker had plenty of those—but of the exact costume, such as the beautiful Madame Dubarry may have worn at one of those delightful fêtes at Versailles? Could not May tell her? asked Madame D'Antin impatiently.

"That is not a period young ladies should study moch," said the Prince paternally. But he knew all about it himself. In Dufaçon's splendid work there was an exact representation of the royal concubine and her black page in "costume de bal." There was a copy at the Museum library, and the Prince would gladly make a reproduction of the engraving.

"But that is an affair of days perhaps, and we have only hours!" cried Julie despairingly.

"Not at all, but of a few minutes," cried the Prince. "Behold my process—how simple, how perfect!" He showed how by placing a sheet of his sensitised paper over an engraving, and exposing it for a few moments, he obtained what could be at once developed into a perfect reproduction of the original.

"I shall ask you for a portfolio of your papers, dear Prince," said Madame D'Antin sweetly.

"But it is yours without asking," cried the Prince warmly; "and as for that pretty coquine and her black boy, you shall have them by this time to-morrow."

"What a charming man!" cried Madame D'Antin, turning to May. "And now we have only to prepare Zamora for her rôle."

"And what is May to be?" asked Charles, a little impatiently.

"Ah, I have her affair," said Madame D'Antin in an impressive manner. "A Béguine—not quite a nun, you know, for she can drop her cross and marry, if she has a chance, and the name is prettier, and I have a sweet costume all ready."

Time had run on so fast that May was frightened to hear the clock strike four, and she realised that she was now due at the Castle, where her grandfather would be impatiently awaiting his cup of tea, and not to be present then would be equivalent to absence without leave. But just at this moment Monsieur D'Antin arrived at the river bank in a fly from Windsor, and May was put into the vehicle and sent off with the Prince and another visitor who had to catch a train. Charles made his way home, where he had been wanted for some time.

CHAPTER III. A SECRET MISSION.

Lord Camus had arrived at the "Woodlands" to spend a few hours with his sister, Lady Tyrrel. He came with a private secretary, and a few despatch-boxes loaded with papers—and a telegraph operator followed his movements to reinforce the native staff. For Lord Camus was a personage in the diplomatic world. And at once he asked for Charles, and there was hue-and-cry after that young man, till at last he turned up, smiling and unconcerned, while all the rest of the household was in a fume.

"Charles," said Lord Camus abruptly, motioning him to be seated, "you have some knowledge of Arabic, I think."

"Yes, as far as patter goes," replied Charles; "I can talk to the beggars fast enough."

"Good conversational knowledge," murmured Lord Camus, making a note on a sheet of Bath post; "and has experience of African travel."

"As far as a bit of shooting in Barbary goes."

"We want a man of your stamp," continued Lord Camus, looking vacantly at Charles, "to undertake a secret mission of high importance—and of considerable peril."

"There must be something nasty about it," thought Charles, "or they would not

offer it to me." But he meekly requested to be put into possession of further details.

Briefly, the situation was this. There was a certain strip of territory in Africa on which three great Powers cast greedy eyes. With the chief of this country everybody supposed we had a treaty, conferring rights of sovereignty and protection which rendered the country useless to anybody else. But the existing treaty turned out to be a fraud, purporting to be signed by a potentate who had been tomahawked by a successful rival some years before its date. Now the object was to obtain a new and valid treaty from the ruling chief, a very truculent fellow, without anybody being a bit the wiser. It was of vital importance that the flaw in title should not be known till it was remedied. Hence the utmost secrecy must be observed; Charles must depart without beat of drum; no one must even know of his departure; none of his own household; none, however near and dear. The question was such a burning one that all kinds of wiles might be expected on the part of the secret diplomatic agents of other Powers, and he must be ready to start as soon as he received his instructions—within a few days at most.

"Not before Lady Tyrrel's ball, I hope," suggested Charles.

"Ah, the ball!" cried Lord Camus; "that will be a good blind for them. You will show yourself at the ball, and slip away next morning by the Continental day mail. Not a word to a living soul; we don't know who may be on the watch."

At this moment Lord Camus's private secretary put his head in, and said in a low voice:

"Here is Monsieur D'Antin; will you see him?"

"In a few minutes. Now, Charles, don't let that fellow see you here; slip out by the other door. I may count upon you, then?"

"You may," said Charles firmly. "But as there is a fair chance that I may never return, may I not say good-bye to one dear and trusty—friend?"

"Not to a soul!" cried Lord Camus hastily; "your word on that, or I withdraw my offer."

"Very well!" said Charles dolefully. And as he withdrew, he thought: "What will poor May think of me?"

But her trouble would be only for a short time. She would soon have news of him; and when he returned, his mission accomplished, he would be in a fair way of advancement, and could negotiate with his father and the Major on more even terms—could dispense with their consent, if it came to that. As for failure, he did not mean to fail, and if he were killed, there was an end of the business as far as he was concerned, and May would learn to love somebody else in time.

CHAPTER IV. THE FANCY DRESS BALL.

A FINE night made half the success of Lady Tyrrel's fancy ball. For that it was a success was evident enough from the crowds of gay people who were there. Round about the "Woodlands" the roads and lanes were blocked with carriages, frightening the geese on the common and lighting astonished villagers to bed with the glare of their lamps. Here were carriages full of hoops and sacques and diamonds, pretty faces, and powdered hair, for it was understood that the spirit of the eighteenth century should pervade the costume, and there were drags full of gallants in cocked hats, perruques, or pigtails, with silver-hilted swords, knee-breeches, and silk stockings. The Life Guards appeared as Marlborough's heroes, all but Lieutenant Bob, who by request had assumed the dress of a "darling Abbé" of the period, and who was generally pronounced to be a "love." And a special train brought a crowd of people from London, who found a covered way prepared for them leading through the softly illuminated grounds to the temporary ball-room, which, brilliantly lit by electricity, glowed like a huge comet against the purple vault of night. Over all floated the music of the string band, stirring the pulses for the dance, an invitation to the ball which brought the guests crowding down into the ball-room, to launch themselves gaily on the polished floor.

Everybody admired Madame Dubarry, and the black page was radiant with delight at the attention she received. And the Béguine was at once claimed by a stalwart highwayman, who proved, of course, to be Charles Tyrrel himself. And after one or two turns round the room, Charles suggested the pleasantness of the cool evening air, and they wandered away by a path he knew, to a little knoll where the gay scene was only visible as a lambent glow among the trees. In the distance a stretch of lonely heights jagged with dark pine-groves, showed against the primrose light that on these summer nights keeps

vigil till the dawn. From the heaths and woods between came a soft breath of air, perfumed with heather and wild thyme, and spiced with aromatic odours from the pine-woods.

"You will be true to me, May," whispered Charles, as his arm stole round her waist unrepulsed; "you will be true to me even if appearances should be against me? You will trust me in everything?"

"I will trust you," replied May, leaning her head softly against his shoulder, "in everything, if you are true to me. But don't leave me to myself. I can bear anything if I have you to talk to and tell about it, but it is hard to go against the wishes of my dear old grandfather."

"But he can't really hate me," said Charles; "we shall persuade him in time."

May shook her head.

"And then," she continued, "he is so anxious about me, and he likes Harry Perkins so much, and he sighs and says how happy I should be with him, and how safe!"

"Meaning that you should marry him," cried Charles jealously; "but, May, you never would——"

"And I think," continued May gravely, "that I should have come to like him in time, for he is very kind and good—if it hadn't been for you, Charlie."

He felt a delicious reproach in her words as he folded her in his arms—a moment of bliss too brief, for a shadow fell upon them, and they started apart.

Meantime Madame Dubarry, beguiled by the music, had tucked her train over her arm, and danced off with a dashing Life-guardsman, and the page, whose polished ebony face and flashing eyes had shown off so effectively the fair charms of his mistress, finding his occupation gone, strolled away very well satisfied with his release, and began to explore the surroundings of the scene. He tasted the ices, regaled himself with coffee, filled his pockets with cakes, made fun with the female servants, who called him a wicked boy, made faces at the solemn men-servants—in fact, acted up to the character of a mischievous page with great address. But at heart it was still Zamora, the devoted slave of her darling May.

"Much splendid house," she said to herself, as she marked all the evidences of wealth and social position, "much fine servants, grand carriages, lovely horses, all, all for my dear Missie May."

When she had explored the public rooms, she fearlessly launched herself on a voyage of discovery in the other regions of the house. She admired the bedrooms, their delicate hangings and appointments; she fixed on the biggest and handsomest. "Dis for my Missie May."

In the course of her investigations, she came upon a scene that interested her amazingly. The room was evidently the special sanctum of the master of the house, plainly furnished with a well-filled book case, a few good pictures, a writing-table, and some comfortable roomy chairs. At the table on opposite sides sat two men stedfastly playing cards; the game was Poker, and they scored with a piece of chalk on the morocco-covered table. Zamora watched the scene intently, her eyes dilating, and a red light showing in their pupils. The players were too intent on their game to notice her stealthy movements. One of the men was D'Antin, the other must be Sir Charles Tyrrel. Him, Zamora had never seen before—and yet there was something about the men and the scene that recalled something similar and yet with widely different surroundings in the distant past: the splendid mansion exchanged for a wattled hut, the soft strains of music for the howling of wild beasts, the gay company for a string of miserable, half-starved slaves.

The game was finished.

"That makes five hundred," said D'Antin carelessly.

Sir Charles nodded morosely.

"I'll give you notes if you don't mind," and he rose to unlock his safe. Then his eyes fell upon Zamora, and the colour left his face, and he trembled visibly. D'Antin turned in the same direction and laughed.

"Come forth, Zamora!" he cried, and the black girl stepped forward.

"Mass'r D'Antin," she cried significantly, "de ladies are looking for you; you go and dance wid everybody."

D'Antin laughed, but moved away.

"I'll give you your revenge later on," he said, waving his hand towards Sir Charles.

The latter had now recovered his composure in some measure, but he kept his eyes still fixed on Zamora.

The black girl nonchalantly took the seat vacated by D'Antin, and returned the glance with one full of calm ferocity.

"Well," said Sir Charles at last, his eye sinking under the fire of hers, "what do you want?"

"Everything," replied Zamora, with a comprehensive gesture. "Houses, lands,

moneys, everything; not for me, but for my Missie May. Your son first of all, and he must bring the rest—everything, do you hear?—for my Missie May."

"Absurd!" cried Sir Charles, his courage roused at last. "What! do you mean that my son is to marry the girl? Let him if he likes, and take his bride to the workhouse, a set of paupers together; and you, get you out of the place!"

Zamora laughed bitterly as she passed out of the room.

"Well, if you will not listen to me, Obi shall come and talk to you."

Sir Charles fell back in his chair, and a yellow hue spread over his face. He knew the full significance of the threat; he had seen the working of the charm, the gradual drying up of the sources of life in its victim, the paralysis of age crawling over the form, however robust, the sinews shrivelling, the muscles relaxing, and existence extinguished in a kind of dry-rot. But that was in the wilds of Africa. Here surely, with all the resources of civilisation about him, a telephone at his hand connected with all the centres of intelligence, with police, detectives, analytic chemists, and all-wise specialists at his call, here surely he could defy the wiles of the African demon?

"Obi may go hang!" he cried valiantly, but he felt a chill at the heart all the same.

Having succeeded in frightening Sir Charles to her heart's content, Zamora now thought it was time to look after her young mistress. Guessing that the lovers would take the opportunity to wander away alone, she soon traced them to their trysting-place and witnessed their embrace. "That is very good," she cried, putting her black face between them, "but there is one thing shall be done before you shall kiss any more." She drew from her pocket a morsel of polished shell, and taking May by the hand she made a little incision on her wrist, from which welled a drop of crimson blood. She repeated the same process with Charles, and with the broad end of the shell she rubbed upon each a minute portion of the other's crimson ichor. "Bone and flesh, say your holy books," cried Zamora, "but blood is better than all. Now whichever shall break faith, let the creature wither away and be consumed—even as this is consumed." She set alight as she spoke a handful of some vegetable fibre, that flamed for a moment and then left the scene in deeper darkness.

"Hullo!" said a voice close at hand. "Have the fireworks commenced already?" It was Monsieur D'Antin alone, and placidly smoking a cigar the perfume of which pleasantly floated in the night air. "Ah, Mr. Charles," he cried, "there is weeping among deserted damsels down below.—Pardon, Mademoiselle, I did not perceive you for the moment — but for you also seeks a rosy-cheeked little Abbé who bewails a vanished partner. Zamora," he continued, as the others went off together towards the ball-room, "remain with me for a moment and tell me a story about thy native land."

CHAPTER V. STOPPED ON THE HIGHWAY.

It was late when Zamora returned to the ball-room, and she found a cotillon in progress. May seemed to be in full enjoyment, and oblivious of time with first one partner, and then another, although her favourite cavaliers were the dashing highwayman, and the rosy-gilled Abbé. But Madame Dubarry was in her glory; the whole brigade of Guards were metaphorically at her feet, and she felt that she was avenging Blenheim and Waterloo.

The figure now in progress was adapted to the display of Madame's coquettish charms. She sat in a chair, her pretty feet in their high-heeled rosetted shoes showing like Cinderella's beneath her satin petticoat. In her hand was a looking-glass, and behind her pressed a cluster of men, who one by one presented their faces to the mirror with the most beseeching expression they could assume. But she wiped them away one after the other with her laced handkerchief. "And I can only choose one!" she cried pityingly. "Quel dommage!" Then Zamora popped up his black face, and the Dubarry screamed and dropped the mirror, which was shattered in the fall. "What a misfortune!" she cried, "what a terrible presage! No, I have no heart to dance any more. Gentlemen, you must excuse me. Zamora, maladroit page, seek my carriage. Sister Marie, I attend your pleasure."

It was hard for May to be snatched away in the midst of her enjoyment, but after all they had stayed too long already. But just then Monsieur D'Antin appeared with disconcerting news. The "Inconstant," to which the party were to have returned that night, had broken away from her moorings and drifted down the stream, and where she was hiding herself, only daylight could show. As for himself and

Madame, they might get places on one of the drags going to town, and return to their rooms at the "Métropole." But delighted as he would be to take charge of Mademoiselle—would it be prudent on her part?

"Oh, no!" cried May, overwhelmed with dismay, for as they had all dressed on board the "Inconstant," their everyday costumes were all adrift on the river. It was equally dreadful to think of masquerading thus in broad daylight in the streets of London, or of arousing the quiet precincts of the Castle in such a guise. "It is a judgement upon me," she cried, "for deceiving my poor grandfather," and tears began to fall on the nun's black robe.

"It is all the fault of that terrible looking-glass," cried Julie.

Zamora drew herself up beside her mistress and looked angrily round.

"It will be bad for who make my missie cry," she said with vehemence.

But Charles was at hand, and came with words of comfort. He had already ordered a dog-cart to be ready, and in twenty minutes he would put them down, May and Zamora, at the Castle gate. There was nothing else for it, and away they went. At other times the drive would have been delightful through the crisp night air, but to May it all passed like a bad dream. The postern was closed, of course, and they had to knock and knock, and when they gained admittance the sentry challenged, and almost dropped his firelock, startled by the appearance of what he took to be the traditional nun who walked the cloisters, accompanied by some spirit, certainly not of the blest. And just then the officer of the guard was coming round accompanied by a lanthorn, and happily he understood the situation in a moment. He grinned, and saluted.

"Had a pleasant evening, I hope; wish I'd been there! Good night, or rather morning."

May was safe in her own room, but bitterly she thought of the morrow: how her name would be discussed among the preux chevaliers of the old brigade, to whom she had been hitherto as the white flower of innocence and truth; and how malicious stories would circulate, and the dames of the cloister would look coldly upon her, and there would be no compensation for all this.

As for Charles himself, who had no notion of what May would have to suffer on his account, he drove homewards gaily enough. The adventurous expedition on which he was about to start now fully occupied his mind. He had received his instructions, some of which were sealed and not to be opened till he reached a certain latitude; that was to prevent his blabbing on the way. And he had been again especially cautioned to depart without fuss or leave-taking as an ordinary traveller, bound on some sporting expedition.

The way was lonely enough; some while between dark pine-woods, to enter which was like descending into a tomb; and again the road ran across an open heath where a dark fir-crowned knoll, that rose above the sky-line, was still known as Gibbet Hill, and was avoided at night by credulous peasants. And just at this point it was startling enough when a figure, armed and masked and mounted on a coal-black steed, suddenly barred his way. The horse that Charles was driving reared and swerved, sending the near wheel into the ditch and its driver spinning into the air.

He came down with a thud that knocked the senses out of him for awhile. When he came to himself he was lying among the heather, and his horse was quietly cropping the grass not far away. The cart had not been overturned, it seemed, and Charles, rising with a little difficulty, found that he was let off for a shaking. His watch was safe, his purse also, and Charles came to the conclusion that some one of the masqueraders from the ball had played a practical joke upon him. It was shabby of the joker to leave his victim to his fate; but perhaps he had been frightened at the result of the pleasantry.

Resuming the reins and his seat, Charles drove quietly home. He was a little dazed with his tumble, and at once retired to rest. When he awoke morning was well advanced, and he found he had not much time to spare to catch the day express for Dover. Then he remembered his official papers which he had carried carefully about with him since he had received them, but in the confusion of his tumble he had forgotten all about them, and now he could not find them anywhere.

"Here am I, a disgraceful failure at the very start," said Charles wildly to himself. There was one chance; his pocket-book might have dropped when he fell. Charles called for a horse and galloped over to the spot. The track where the dog-cart had left the road was still plainly to be seen; and there, snugly lying under a tuft of heather, was the missing portfolio. Charles raised

it to his lips in gratitude for such an escape, and then his eyes clouded over in doubt, for, mingled with the scent of Russia leather, was a slight perfume of chemicals. Could the papers have been tampered with? No, that was almost impossible. Probably the paper used was chemically prepared for hot climates. That was a highly satisfactory explanation, and Charles an hour later was on his way to Dover, having just nicked the train at Charing Cross.

CHAPTER VI. THE ADVENTURER AT HOME.

It was high noon in the Champs Elysées, and the world seemed to have grown a little drowsy in the summer heat. People dozed on the benches under the trees; there was a fragrance of bouillon from the newspaper kiosk where the lady in charge was taking her refreshment; carriages rolled lazily along at fitful intervals, and the innumerable sounds which are the audible breath of a great city were hushed, as it were, in a gentle slumber. Only those people whose "déjeuners" were yet to come showed signs of life; those who had eaten theirs, and a numerous class who had no hopes in that direction, shared alike the lethargic spirit of the hour.

In a charmingly decorated salle in one of the handsomest mansions of this pleasant quarter, Monsieur and Madame D'Antin were seated at breakfast tête-à-tête. Everything in the service and appointments of the meal showed the presence of wealth and good taste; the master of the house was in his usual placid good spirits, and seemed blessed with an excellent appetite; Madame, on the other hand, appeared a little troubled and out of temper. She only trifled with her food, and presently called for tea, which was brought her, and of the strongest, by the "femme de chambre."

"Reckless Julie!" said D'Antin in a tone of raillery. "To eat nothing and to drink strong tea. Have pity on that charming complexion."

"But I have slept badly," cried Julie, "and I have been tormented with bad dreams — ah, if I had only Zamora to interpret them for me! And also I have a letter this morning from that poor May—it is evident that she is suffering—and she asks me so innocently, 'Is it possible that you have seen anything of Monsieur Charles in Paris?' Might I not send her one little word to tell her where he is?"

"A thousand times, no!" cried D Antin. "What! after having managed everything so neatly to betray ourselves by such a bêtise? Besides, I consider that young man as écrasé."

"But no harm will happen to him!" cried Madame D'Antin anxiously.

"Only a few months' detention," said D'Antin carelessly. "But let us concern ourselves no more about him. We will find a better match for your charming friend. There is the Prince, now! He seemed to admire her."

"Yes, and he enquired earnestly about her dot. But what could he do—poor and proscribed, and such a firebrand?"

"But with a good fortune, don't you think that would tempt him?—he is tired of politics—and a lovely wife."

"Ah, with a fortune—but whence to come? From the poor Knight her grandfather, who puts shillings in a child's money-box — and it is to pay for his funerals, the poor man!"

"All that might be arranged," said D'Antin lightly, as he lit a cigarette. "Conceive, now, that when we leave Paris we visit our château in Normandy. It is a tumbledown old place, but I have ordered a few rooms to be made habitable. Mademoiselle joins us with Zamora. What danger would there be for the Prince? My servants are devoted to me, the neighbourhood is as innocent of politics as a convent of nuns. He assumes a false name and pays us a visit—poor man, after being shut up so long in that sacré little island he will breathe freely once more."

Madame D'Antin regarded her husband with an expression of some mistrust, mingled with the admiration with which he inspired her.

"And how," she asked, "do you propose to supply the deficiency in the young lady's fortune?"

"By putting a little legitimate pressure upon Sir Charles Tyrrel," replied D'Antin. "He did her father a great injury, and owes her some reparation. Not that he would acknowledge the debt, but the poor man has been terrified with the vague threats of your friend Zamora. He is timid and superstitious, and believes the poor thing to be a sorceress. He has written to me that he will call upon me, and no doubt he seeks some arrangement."

Just then a servant announced that Sir Charles Tyrrel, passing through, and pressed for time, particularly desired to see Monsieur.

"Quite à propos," said D'Antin, smiling. "We will see him, of course."

Sir Charles entered, looking anxious and careworn. His anxiety was about himself, it seemed, for as soon as preliminary greetings were over, he asked nervously:

"How do you think I am looking?"

"Oh, my friend," said D'Antin, laughing, "it is easy to see. Too many fancy balls, too much poker."

"I assure you," cried Sir Charles nervously, "I have not touched a card since I saw you. By the way, we haven't settled yet," and he began to fumble for his pocket-book.

"Oh, that when you take your revenge," said D'Antin carelessly. "And when shall that be—now? I had intended the races at Auteuil, but I will ruin myself with you instead."

"No, not at this moment, and in Madame D'Antin's charming society."

"But I have duties, too," said Madame D'Antin, smiling politely, but rising in obedience to a signal from her husband.

When the two were alone, Sir Charles's embarrassment increased.

"I haven't felt right," he stammered, "since that night when the black girl threatened me. It gave me such a turn, too—to be recognised after all these years. Didn't you feel it, D'Antin?"

"Well, no," said D'Antin. "I hadn't such an interest in the matter. All the world may know my share of the business. I didn't betray anybody."

"No! but you shared the plunder," said Sir Charles sneeringly.

"That was only fair," replied D'Antin with calmness. "Of what use to you would have been all that store of ivory without porters to carry it to the coast? But do you remember how you won the whole from me at poker the very next night? It was in the forest. I think I now can hear the roar of the wind among the tree-tops. The lanthorn flickered dismally. I looked up, and just over you I saw the features of a black girl; one hand clutched the matting of the hut, the other a knife. I sprang to my feet instinctively, and she vanished. That was an unlucky spring for me. Another moment, and I should have cleared the board; for, look you, I should have made myself your executor and sole legatee."

"You never told me, you never warned me," gasped Sir Charles.

"Why should I?" asked D'Antin contemptuously. "We were never comrades, only accomplices. But now you are rich; you turned your spoil to more advantage than I could have done. Why do not you purchase your safety? Accept the black girl's terms. Marry your son to the Wyvern girl, and settle a handsome fortune upon them."

"Never!" cried Sir Charles. "What! meet that girl at every turn, and feel every look she gives me as a reproach? And her eyes are like her mother's," added the baronet in an agitated whisper; "and I should never escape from them. And the girl is his daughter—the man whose very name I hate and loathe."

"All which does not concern me much," said D'Antin, as if tired of the subject. "Well, if you won't play poker, shall I drive you to Auteuil?"

Sir Charles declined, but arranged to meet D'Antin after dinner on the boulevard, where they were to finish their match at poker. Sir Charles was a prudent gamester, and he mistrusted the cards he might find at his friend's house or his club, lest they should have been previously marked; but in a café, taken haphazard, there was little risk of that kind of trickery.

D'Antin drove down to the racecourse in a well-appointed English-built mail phaeton, drawn by a pair of well-matched bays. It was a gay little meeting, the stands were fluttering with charming costumes, the lawns were covered with groups of distinguished people; music sounded softly, and over all rose the hoarse voice of the British bookmaker making his usual offers to "bar one." D'Antin moved among the throng, exchanging recognitions on every side, a popular oracle with the gilded youth, an amusing "flâneur" among the ladies. With it all there were eyes that followed his movements—eager eyes from the crowd, gleaming eyes that glowed under shocks of crisp curls, in faces white and thin. "Is it he?" was whispered in the crowd, while another said, "Not yet, it is not certain."

But D'Antin troubled himself little about what passed in the crowd; he was fully taken up with his bets, and with the horses and their owners, and with one or two pretty women who looked up to him as their guide and mentor in the affairs of the turf. His judgement was good, his luck was in the ascendant, he won a little for his fair friends and a good deal for himself; and then, with his fascinating associates, reinforced by some other smart people, he dined gaily at a fashionable restaurant, and parting with his friends, sallied forth on the boulevard, hoping to follow his vein and win a few thousands from the rich baronet.

In this, however, he was not successful. Sir Charles, who was as keen and wily as himself, favoured by chance, won back all he had lost and a few hundreds more. That he had won the match seemed to give more pleasure to Sir Charles than the gain of the money. Still, it was pleasant to see with what nonchalance D'Antin paid over his losses. Sir Charles began to feel more confidence in his friend; and after all, if he chose, D'Antin could save him from the fear that now followed him like his shadow. His influence over Zamora was undoubted, but would he exert it on behalf of Sir Charles?

"Why should I?" asked D'Antin cynically. "If the girl is a sorceress, as you say, and can remove people silently from her path, she will be a very useful kind of friend. I doubt her powers myself, and in your case shall watch the experiment with interest."

Sir Charles shuddered at the cold-blooded way in which the other spoke.

"But if I pay handsomely for safety?" he asked.

Then D'Antin unfolded his plan: "With Miss Wyvern handsomely married, and Zamora thus propitiated, all danger would cease; but to marry her handsomely she must have a handsome fortune, and that Sir Charles must provide. Twenty-five thousand pounds, not a penny less! And consider it," said D'Antin, "as an act of expiation."

Sir Charles pondered over the matter as he sat under the awning on the gay boulevard, while on his ears fell unheeded the light chatter all around, the rattle of cups and glasses, the voices of the waiters poising their loaded trays, the cries of the newspaper sellers, mingled with the clatter of vehicles. All passed before him like a dream; the constant procession of strange faces momentarily passing into the glare and lost again in the shadows under the trees, the pulsation of the crowd that followed some strange law in its very irregularities. D'Antin watched him with a certain amusement in his eyes—perhaps he was watched himself by eyes insensible to humour—he marked the contest of emotion in the mind of the hard-headed man of money, and laughed outright.

"To another time," he cried, hailing a passing voiture as he sprang to his feet.

"Stay!" cried Sir Charles, "I consent! We will settle the matter now."

After a few words of negotiation the pair hurried across to the great dimly-lighted hall, where the "Petite Bourse" was in full swing, and where crowds of people of all conditions of life were eagerly crying out prices and names of stock, the whole place like an anthill for incessant and seemingly purposeless movement. And here Sir Charles quickly got hold of a broker he knew, and arranged for the purchase of bonds to the value of twenty-five thousand pounds, to be held by D'Antin as trustee, but registered in Sir Charles's name. At the same time Sir Charles signed an undertaking to transfer the whole of the stock to May Wyvern on her marriage.

When D'Antin arrived at home, he found his wife sitting up for him half asleep on the sofa, and very much dissatisfied with the dull evening she had spent without his society. D'Antin gaily flourished in the air a large sealed envelope.

"See, I have secured your friend's happiness. Here is the fortune which will enable her to marry her friend the Prince. Who is the sorcerer now?"

"Ah!" cried Julie, throwing her arms about his neck, "when you are amiable like this you are divine."

CHAPTER VII. AN INVITATION TO NORMANDY.

Although May's forebodings were not altogether falsified by the event, and some gossiping stories as to the fancy ball went round among her friends, causing some of the more serious-minded to look coldly upon her, yet these things would not have troubled her much but for her grandfather's gloom and sadness. He did not reproach her—he seemed only to reproach himself. "I am not able to guide the footsteps of one growing up to womanhood," he said to himself. And he could no longer trust Zamora, for she had shown herself as wild and headstrong as his granddaughter. And as Perkins told him, he ought to put May under some good, rigid kind of woman—Perkins had an aunt who answered to the description—and separate her from Zamora, who might be provided with some other situation. But when it came to the point, the old warrior had not the courage to break the plan to his womankind. He had mounted the breach at Mooltan, the first of the storming party, but that was nothing to facing the tears and indignation of two young women.

But May's most serious trouble was the strange silence of her lover. He had parted from her with a world of tenderness, and yet from that moment it seemed as if

he had forgotten her very existence. His canoe was no longer moored under the willows,

> Nor up the lawn nor in the wood was he.

Yet after all that had passed, it was due to her that he should make some open attempt to win her, and to leave her thus, as it were in suspense, seemed not only cruel but insulting. Yet she would forgive him all if he would only come back to her.

Soon there came news that the "Woodlands" was shut up. Sir Charles had gone one way, his fashionable wife another; and as for young Charles, he might be with one or the other, or more probably with neither, and enjoying himself in his own way. The D'Antins, too, had gone. They had returned no more to the "Inconstant," which had damaged herself against the weir in her ill-timed nocturnal wanderings, and was now in the boat-builders' hands.

And thus with neither love nor friendship to console her, it was dead low water with poor May. The salt, swift tide had come and gone, bringing its strange sea life into the quiet pools, and there leaving it to flounder as it might. And yet outwardly things went on as they did before the flood. The clock from the old curfew tower struck the hours, wafts of music marked the services in the grand old chapel of the Knights of St. George—the organ rolled, the shrill choir-boys chanted their loudest. Workmen passed to and fro, whistling and joking, unsubdued by the solemnity of surroundings. And an intermittent procession of sightseers came and stared and went their way Sometimes the crisp clatter of cavalry would come from the street below, and the faint sounds of cheering, and there was always a kind of military stir about the place, what with bugle-calls, and guard mounting, and the tramp of scarlet warriors in tall bearskins. There was the rattle of steel scabbards on the hundred steps, and the clink of spurs in the cloisters, and soldiers in undress hung over the battlements, and exchanged greetings with comrades or sweethearts in distant parts of the town. When the broad banner of St. George floated from the huge round tower high above, all the stir and life about the place seemed suddenly intensified, and the gossip of the old Knights was of people distinguished in the great world who were coming or going—of who was in waiting, and when would be the next great function. But when the flag was hauled down this morning excitement was over, and pipes and the "Morning Post" resumed the ascendant. What a charm there had been about the place to the young girl when she had first spent her holidays there with her grandfather, and what a pleasant spot it had seemed when, school days over, she had come to live there altogether! But now she wearied of it all. "He cometh not," she said like her of the moated grange, and walls and turrets only reminded her of a prison.

And then one morning the postman brought her a letter with the familiar blue French stamp, and the sun shone once more "o'er life's dull stream." Her friend Julie anyhow had not proved faithless, and as she read on, the colour came to her cheeks, the light to her eyes. An invitation for a month at the Château D'Antin was good, but better still was the expectation excited by the lines, written on a separate slip: "For your eyes only. We shall probably have among our guests one for whom I think you have some esteem, but who has, I fancy, even warmer sentiments in his heart which obstacles now removed have prevented him from declaring." Now, this could mean no other than Charles, thought May, with happy confidence. Now all would be explained, and she might put back her lover in the niche which had been so wofully empty without him.

The old Knight hardly recognised May's footstep as she marched lightly in and placed her letter before him. Carefully adjusting his spectacles, he looked it over.

"And you wish to go?" he asked, looking gravely up at her over his glasses.

"If I wish to go!" she exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "And Zamora, too; you see she is also invited; and she worships Julie!"

On the whole the Major was glad of the proposed visit. It relieved him of the necessity of coming to a decision as to his future course. It was just possible that Madame D'Antin might wish to retain Zamora, and she to remain in her service. And that would be a solution of one part of the question.

In the course of the day the rattle of a bicycle bell announced the approach of another visitor. This was the Prince, with a "Kodak" slung round him on one side, while on the other was a wallet for botanical specimens. With his dark waving hair, high forehead, and soft, melancholy eyes, he was one of the mildest-mannered men who ever won the reputation of a firebrand. An ill-regulated desire to pro

mote the happiness of his fellow-creatures had reduced him to a condition of almost indigence. From wealth he had descended to penury as gaily as one takes a walk through a garden of roses. But with it all he was always pre-eminently a gentleman, and even in spite of himself, very much of the grand seigneur.

To the Major he was only known from his political reputation, which did not greatly recommend him to the old soldier; but the latter speedily recognised the genuine qualities of his guest, and the two soon came to be on excellent terms. The Prince had come to pay his respects to the Major, and to enquire after the young lady whom he had met in the company of her charming friend, Madame D'Antin. Also he came to offer his services in the capacity of honorary courier, if Mademoiselle had determined, as Madame D'Antin had suggested, to pay a visit to Normandy. He would not offer to be her personal escort, as the Prince observed with a melancholy smile that his visits to the Continent were not exempt from a kind of risk which would render him an undesirable travelling companion.

"Then why go, sir?" asked the Major earnestly. "To risk your life when duty calls, or under the orders of a superior officer, is one thing; but a useless risk is one that a brave man should abstain from."

"Exactly," said the Prince, "when duty calls; but one may not always recognise her voice; but superior orders—yes, when one has once enlisted in a service there is nothing for it but unquestioning obedience."

"You are right, sir," said the Major. "That has always been my principle; but it doesn't suit the young people."

May had entered at the moment, and the Prince rose to receive her, and gracefully bowed over the hand she extended to him.

"Ah, these tyrants of the hearth!" said the Prince. "They impose their commands instead of receiving them."

He detained her hand for a moment, looking at her the while with an expression in which was expressed such a kindly interest and sweetness of regard, mingled with something that was almost like entreaty, or perhaps warning, that May was interested in spite of herself.

"You are quite sure," asked the Prince softly, "that you are prudent in undertaking this journey with no other protection than your femme de chambre? Would it not be better to wait till some escort can be obtained other than myself, who can only watch from a distance?"

"Oh, I do not fear the voyage," said May, smiling, "and I shall be met on the other side."

"Yes, on the other side," repeated the Prince dreamily. "But one is not always safe on the other side. I am not, anyhow," he added, rousing himself and smiling cheerfully.

"You don't see any danger in this visit for May?" cried the Major, puzzled by something in his guest's manner.

May looked imploringly at the Prince. He understood her great desire for the journey.

"I know of no danger," he said, smiling—and indeed he spoke the truth. But he did not mention that he had found nailed to his desk that morning in his humble lodgings in Soho, a scrap of paper on which was written: "If invited, go. Orders await you there." And this was the man whom D'Antin thought to attract with an imaginary dower.

CHAPTER VIII. AT THE OLD CHATEAU.

THE departure of May and Zamora for the Continent, though not an important event for those inured to the coming and going of the great, still caused some excitement among those immediately concerned. Mr. Perkins had come down purposely to see them off and to put them into the Continental train at Charing Cross. And his nephew, the coxswain of the "Ark," was at the station with one or two of his schoolfellows, "just to cheer them up a bit." And with this laudable intention they purchased a copy of every comic paper published, and threw them into the carriage just before starting, which comic numbers flying all over the seats, gave the other occupants an unfavourable opinion of the "frivolity" of their fellow passengers. Lieutenant Bob had also found his way to the station, and apologetically offered a bouquet of hothouse flowers, "just for the journey, you know," and was rewarded by a smile of thanks that sent a glow through his whole frame. The Major was there of course, looking a little anxious, and with him Captain Capricorn, R.N., who, though he dwelt, as a Naval Knight, outside the Castle ward, was interested in all its young people, and had brought a little gilt-edged book, which he pressed into May's hand as he whispered, "An antidote against Continental frivolities."

May's joyous feelings were not long damped by her regrets at parting from so many friendly faces. And Zamora, who regretted nobody but a certain piper of the Scots Guards, whose music recalled the primitive instrumentation of the performers of her native land, Zamora was wild with delight at the prospect of new scenes and new faces. And with the charming instinct common to her race of telling people just what they want to hear, she whispered confidently to May: "Something tell me, missie, we coming nearer and nearer him you want to see." And May had the same impression. "I am sure I should not feel so glad," she said to herself, "if he were out of sympathy with me." The mystic rite performed by Zamora seemed to have established a subtle link between them. It does not require a cartload of ceremony to establish a spiritual connection between souls that have affinity. And so strong was the indefinite impression that influenced May that she half expected to see Master Charles walking the deck of the smart steamboat that was whistling impatiently for the train, and hurrying people along with its signals of departure. Needless to say, he was not there.

And again, when they reached Boulogne, among the crowds of people in airy summer costumes, the blue blouses and the bare-legged fishergirls, she looked in vain for the one face that would have made the whole scene to her as gay and "riant" as it was in fact. And with this disappointment the day seemed to cloud over, and rolling along over the marshy flats and grey, dull, sandy wastes, the train as it rounded the frequent curves and roared over low girder bridges appeared like a convoy of funeral cars on its way to some fête of the catacombs. And at Amiens it seemed to have reached its destination.

Whether it was the darkness of a coming storm or the humid vapours of a manufacturing city that hung over the dark and dirty expanse of iron and glass, anyhow, the station of Amiens seemed to have turned day into night. The black girders, the blacker vans, festooned with wreaths of steam that showed a dusky bronze in the jaundiced light; the hollow, echoing noises that were heard in the semi-darkness, the clank of hammer and axle, the rolling of loaded vans striking against each other with sharp angry shocks, the monotonous chant of porters announcing the departure and destination of trains with the solemnity of a liturgy; sights and sounds all combined, gave the travellers an impression of weird and solemn gloom. Zamora shivered and trembled as she stood on the draughty platform clutching a bundle of wraps and staring wildly about her. Some country-women in white caps and short petticoats who were travelling to market regarded her with unfeigned admiration.

"It is an American," said one. "They are all of that colour."

"But no," cried her companion. "I have seen some that are almost as white as we others."

But May heard no more of the conversation, for just then there rolled into the station a heavy black train, that drew up by the platform with much clanking and clashing. There was no opening of doors or rush of passengers—indeed, there were no doors to open, as each of the black, iron-bound vans showed only one tiny grated window just under its heavily-clamped roof. And each van bore an inscription, neatly lettered on its side, "The Director of Public Prisons."

May looked at the dismal train with curiosity mixed with feelings of compassion. What kind of creatures were these, who were guarded with more precautions than a cageful of tigers, and transferred from place to place in jealous seclusion? But Zamora clasped her by the arm in great excitement, and pointed upwards to the grating of one of the prison vans. There a hand was visible, a sun-browned and well-formed masculine hand, loosely grasping the iron grating as if seeking the light and air and liberty denied to the owner. To people accustomed to study hands, they can be as easily recognised as faces. And though untaught in palmistry, Zamora possessed a faculty of keen observation in trifling matters.

"Look, missie," she cried, "there your lubia. See the mark that I made?"

And there sure enough on the wrist, whiter than the hand above it, was to be seen a tiny red cross, the mark of the incision that Zamora had made on the night of the ball.

"Oh, is it Charles?" cried May, stretching up to the hand and embracing it with her fingers.

The hand grasped hers with firm, ecstatic pressure. A voice was heard from the cavernous depths of the prison van, but what it said could not be distinguished, for the hand was sharply plucked back, while the sharp tinkle of a bell gave an alarm of some kind to the warders of the prison train.

And next moment May and her companion were surrounded by a little crowd of officials, gesticulating and angrily denouncing poor May's instinctive act as a serious contravention of such an article of the Code; and in a few moments a brigadier of gendarmes in a fierce cocked hat, his breast hung with "galons" and decorated with medals, was drawing up a "procès verbal" with all the alacrity in the world. And with the indignation of the prison officials was evidently mingled some apprehension on their own account, for May distinguished the words "mis au secret," which implied that the prisoner, like the "Man with the Iron Mask," was debarred from any intercourse with the outer world. Zamora, half frightened, half indignant, endeavoured to break through the throng and open a way for her mistress, but half-a-dozen hands thrust her back, and she was told to consider herself in the custody of the law.

But in the midst of the imbroglio, some one interfered on the part of the accused. A man in a flat cap and rough travelling suit accosted the brigadier, and demanded a few words with him. The gendarme's brow relaxed as the stranger spoke in a low aside. He nodded comprehendingly, and pressed the other's hand as he concluded.

"Ah, if it is an affair of the heart!" he whispered; and then addressing the group of officials:

"Gentlemen," he said, "explanations have been given me which reduce the importance of this incident to a mere act of benevolence on the part of a young and feeling heart, which may well pass without further notice."

There was a general chorus of assent as the brigadier tore up the half-finished procès and scattered its fragments on the platform. The warders sprang to their posts, a whistle sounded, and the convoy of "black Marias" trundled noisily onwards, and was lost to sight in fume and darkness.

The brigadier politely escorted the two young women, a good deal agitated by their recent experience, to their particular train, which was waiting in a siding till the Paris express passed out. But where was the man who had interposed so effectually, and whom May desired to thank for his good offices? He was no longer to be seen, but she fancied from the glimpse she had obtained of his features he was none other than the Prince. Was it possible that he could solve the mystery attending her lover? Was it really Charles whose hand she had clasped just now? Zamora had no doubt as to that. Had she not foretold that he was approaching. And now, although they were separated for awhile, there would soon be a happy reunion. In this Zamora spoke rather as a friend than a prophetess, for, in secret, she no longer felt very confident about the matter. Her fetish had deceived her once, keeping its promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope; and Zamora, in her anger, was inclined to throw it out of the window.

The train which was for Rouen did not hurry along at demon speed. There was plenty of time to admire the scenery on the way, and that, when they reached the Pays de Bray — the great dairy farm of the country — was pleasant enough. Little valleys, sparkling streams, meadows everywhere, cows tethered in platoons, the scent of milk-pails in the air. It is a country to itself, shut in with chalky cliffs and ridges of far-stretching downs, easily overlooked by a traveller in a hurry, but which has its own quiet, peaceful charm. Then the train reaches the high chalk plateau, where now the harvest was everywhere cleared, and the wide fields lay bare, lines of poplars marking out the roads, and tufted groups of elms the scattered farmsteads. Queer wheeled ploughs were at work in the fields, and teams of strong, powerful horses, that neighed a greeting of defiance to their noisy iron brother; but elsewhere silence and the sadness of autumn seemed to brood over the country with the haze that crept slowly over the undulating plain.

It was almost night, and the afterglow of sunset was lighting up the wooded scarps of the hills, when Rouen was seen for a moment, the queen of many valleys, with her spires and towers rising from the mass of roofs, all grey and faded red; and the river all pearl and gold, winding among tufted islets, and losing itself among hills charged with the deep night shadows. Only a glimpse, and then all darkness and gloom as the train rattled into the half-lighted station.

And here Julie was waiting with a charming welcome. She really was delighted to see her friend, and Zamora was of all people the most desired. She took them to an hotel where she had secured rooms for the night, and on the morrow there would be a short railway journey to the station, where a carriage would await them. As soon as May had told of their encounter at Amiens, Julie became a little thoughtful and uneasy.

"Pure imagination," she cried, rallying her forces with an effort. "What one desires, that one sees! Charles is, I fancy, dancing attendance on his stepmother at one of those stupid German baths; but as to the Prince, there your discernment probably was not at fault. He is on his way to visit us, and between ourselves at his own desire, expressly to meet a young lady who is too proud to wear the willow long for a recreant lover."

Madame D'Antin's words had an effect upon May. She began to doubt the evidence of her senses. And Zamora, anxious to please her new friend, wavered a little in her faith—or so pretended.

When they left the stuffy railway carriage next morning for the handsome phaeton that awaited them with its fast-stepping trotters, nothing was more pleasant than their reception by old Gruchet the coachman, who had served the Fouchets, Julie's family, from his youth, and had recently transferred himself to the service of the D'Antins. But Julie preferred to drive herself, and with May on the box seat; Gruchet established himself with Zamora and Madame's maid in the seats at the back, where, judging from the shouts of suppressed laughter that were heard every now and then, he did not fail to prove amusing.

Through pleasant shady lanes, among orchards, meadows, and fat pastures, the horses bore them merrily. Great heaps of apples were lying under the trees, and the cider press was at work in the farmyard, where the fowls were assembled "en masse," while flocks of pigeons fluttered joyously around. Here they met a mule-cart laden with great brazen vessels full of milk, and a sturdy peasant-woman driving, who gave them a cheerful "bonjour."

Between high banks overgrown with ferns and briars and through an archway of scattered trees that had once been a grand avenue, you caught sight of the old Château half buried in verdure. A ruined gateway opened upon a grass-grown "court of honour," the buildings about which had been converted into granaries and cowsheds. A ruined bastion in one corner showed that the place had been once defensible, and even armed with artillery, and a fragment still remained of a square keep built of black basalt, which had gained for the place the name it still bore in the neighbourhood of the "château noir." But the mass of the main building still towered above the trees, here with a steep slated roof, and there rising with a tall gabled turret—at once formal and fantastic, gay with the creepers that hung from old battered walls, and solemn as death, with its dark and broken windows that looked out like sightless eyes.

"Here is plenty of work for the Prince's camera," said Madame D'Antin lightly. "But it is a gloomy old place after all."

But skirting the walls by a newly constructed road, and crossing the moat by a wooden bridge, where the noise of the carriage disturbed a quantity of giant carp that had been sunning themselves among the waterweeds, they came upon a more cheerful scene. A pretty pavilion had been restored and redecorated, with pleasant rooms looking out upon a flower garden that had just been turfed, gravelled, and stocked with flowers.

And the Prince was on the steps to receive them. He had arrived the night before, and had made himself at home. Already he had made friends with everybody about the place, with the surly old house-dog, with the pigs even, and the chickens. Just now he had been romping with the children in the courtyard, for there was a houseful of them belonging to the farmer, who lived, encamped as it were, in the vast buildings. Where there is room the children come. He had collected, too, all the legends of the neighbourhood. How a spirit was supposed to haunt the "tour noire," which at the approaching death of a Marquis D'Antin, flew over the old Château mournfully crying, "La mort." But this had not occurred since the Revolution, when the then Marquis had been guillotined with the Girondins.

"What happiness for us if we succeed in reinstating 'la mort'!" cried Julie pettishly. "Really, Prince, you might find something more cheerful to tell us."

In truth, Madame was a good deal put out at the absence of her husband, who had gone off to the races at Deauville without a word of an excuse. But when morning brought a letter from him saying that he had met the Count de Tessier, who leased the shooting of the national forest, and that they had arranged for a grand boar hunt, and that a number of gay people would be of the party to witness or share in the pig-killing, Madame D'Antin recovered her spirits at once, and was wild on the subject of hunting costumes from that moment. And there were horses to

be provided, and everything to be done at a moment's notice.

"Or could one go in a palanquin? Suggest something, Prince!" cried Julie.

CHAPTER IX. HUNTING THE WILD BOAR.

For some days Monsieur D'Antin had been staying at the Château and making himself agreeable to his guests. He was especially attentive to May, driving her about to all the places that were worth seeing in the neighbourhood. And although Zamora accompanied them on these expeditions, yet they were not much liked by Julie, who would say to her husband:

"You bring my friend here to provide her with a good marriage—and yet do nothing to forward it."

"Ah, ma belle," D'Antin would reply, with an ambiguous smile, "am I not doing all I can to reconcile her to her future lot?"

But in truth, now that the Prince was fairly within the toils, D'Antin troubled himself no more about the match. More important matters occupied his thoughts. For some time he had felt that his position was becoming untenable. In society he felt a growing coldness towards him, which convinced him he was a suspected person. And he had had an impression for some days past that he was being watched and followed. And the arrest of the Prince, which it was arranged by the police should take place on the day of the boar hunt, would increase his danger. He might retain his place in society by a bold front, and at the cost of a few duels, perhaps; but could he escape the secret vengeance of the many Continental firebrands who regarded the Prince with fanatical devotion? And yet he could not afford to dispense with his capture.

For D'Antin's financial position was becoming desperate, and the Power that was interested in the Prince's capture was a liberal and trustworthy paymaster. Yet after all, this blood money would go but a little way in satisfying his creditors. And why should he run these risks on their behalf? The money would give him a good start on a new career in the new world, and if he could add to it the twenty-five thousand pounds which he held in trust, he might hope to make a splendid position. But strange to say he had scruples in appropriating this money, partly due to superstitious fears, for although, in Sir Charles Tyrrel's case, he scoffed at the perils of Zamora's vengeance, yet he had secret fears of its being directed against himself. If he could do justice to May and secure the fortune at the same time!

D'Antin's notions of doing justice were peculiar. If he could persuade May to elope with him to America, the America of the south, where young republics were struggling to realise their immense natural advantages and ready to welcome a man like himself, with capital to exploit the glorious richness of the soil, and not ask too curiously as to his antecedents! There was the world that was waiting for him to conquer. But he needed a helpmate, and he flattered himself that if he could carry off May he could soon reconcile her to her lot. Any scruples she might have might be set at rest by a hasty divorce from his present wife, and a subsequent formal marriage. Zamora, too, would be in her proper element in the luxuriant sub-tropical regions of America. Already he had fired her imagination with descriptions of the delights of a life where fogs and frosts were unknown.

As to the means of evasion! Ascending to the loftiest turret window of the old Château, looking towards the west one saw where luxuriant pastures merged in sandy dunes, and over these a strip of living water sometimes darkly purple with summer skies, or again grey and gloomy with storms. And lingering on the horizon on quiet days might be seen the smoke of great Atlantic steamers, which passed regularly between the port of Havre and the South American ports, often steaming close inshore and in full view of the gay crowds that throng the broad sands of Trouville and its sister watering-places. And barely four miles from the Château was a little fishing village with a port and creek, but surrounded by rocks, and left to itself by pleasure-seekers. Now D'Antin mistrusted Havre, with its large foreign population permeated by secret societies. And nothing would be easier than to engage the harbour tug for a certain day when the Atlantic steamer was due to pass, and to intercept her and get on board. Already he had proposed a short sea trip to May, and she had seemed to like the notion; and once on board the American boat it would be too late to recede.

Yet to all outward appearance D'Antin was fully occupied with the amusements of the moment; with the village fête to which he handsomely subscribed; with the visit of the Orphéon from the neighbouring

town, who sang glees and madrigals by moonlight with great effect in the courtyard, and were entertained afterwards in the great hall; the farmer having piled all his sheaves at one end and the tables being spread at the other; great diversion being afforded by an owl flying out through a broken window, scared by the noise of the revellers.

But the boar hunt was to be the great event of the season, and the D'Antins had invited a large party for dinner, and there was to be the carré or cutting up of the game by torchlight in the courtyard, dogs baying, and horns sounding, all after the ancient method of Venerie. But in truth D'Antin had no intention of being present at these rejoicings.

"You will soon be tired of the hunt," he had said to May. "The only thing wild about it will be the costumes of the hunting people. We will steal off, you and I and Zamora, and inhale the sea breezes, and perhaps take a little voyage in the public steamer."

"Yes, I shall enjoy that," said May gratefully, little suspecting any snare in the matter.

The eve of the great hunting day had been blusterous and stormy, and the night was gloomy and overcast. The wind howled among the heavy chimney-shafts of the old Château, and sounded like many voices calling from the dark recesses of its deserted chambers; and when the wind was hushed for awhile, in the stillness could be heard a moaning sound of the great roaring billows that dashed against the rocks of the Atlantic shore. Evil dreams hung about the old Château, and descended upon restless sleepers; the horses plunged and reared in their stables, terrified by sounds inaudible to the general. In the night May awoke with a feeling of terrible oppression; she heard the beating of wings and a strange, inarticulate cry. It was "la mort, la mort," repeated over and over again, with a tone of dreadful significance.

After all, it was only a screech-owl, perhaps; and May slept again, to be awakened by bright sunshine and the sounds of music. The stormy winds that with such rudeness blew had blown themselves out at last, and the morning air was crisp and delightful. And in front of the window a pleasant sight was to be seen. On the road was the pack of great rough dogs, united by couples, and in the midst of them rode the piqueur in green and gold, and the "valets" were gathered round on their stout, serviceable horses, each with the monstrous "cor de chasse" slung round his shoulders. But when they put their horns to their lips, and sounded the reveillé, all in unison, with that clear, stirring note that seems to ring out from the heart of centuries past, while the dogs joined in with happy clamour, nothing more full of the melancholy joy of autumn could well be imagined.

May hastened down, all forebodings forgotten, meaning to have some talk with the piqueurs and the dogs, but the former were all at breakfast in the great kitchen of the farm, and the dogs, who had been turned into the barn, set up such a ferocious baying at her approach that she left them to their surly selves; and then she strayed into the old garden, where lovely pears were ripening against the high walls, guarded by an old Cerberus of a gardener who farmed the produce.

"Cinq sous la pièce," he cried, as May approached them lovingly. And he intimated that he required the money down.

In the old summer-house she saw the Prince, and went to speak to him, but drew back when she reached him, for he was like one beside himself with anguish, twisting his hands, and writhing as if in agony; but presently he came out, pale, but composed, and greeted May with grave composure.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked kindly. "Are you suffering?"

"Only from a nervous crisis that overtakes me sometimes," he answered calmly. "But I am glad to have met you here, for I can say farewell to you now, and thank you for the many pleasant moments you have given me."

"Ah! you have had bad news, and are going away," said May sadly. "I am very sorry for you."

"And that sorrow," said the Prince, "is the one consolation I have in departure. Do not cease to be sorry for me till you cease to remember me."

"Aha, my dear Prince," said D'Antin's cheerful voice, "a hunting morning is an early morning. Come in, all of you, and eat something before you start, for when the hour of déjeuner arrives, who knows where we shall be?"

At the last moment, Madame D'Antin had given up the idea of riding—saddle-horses not being obtainable—and the whole party were driven in a light wagonette to the forest, the men alighting to take their stations with guns and cartridge-belts at the "rond point" where all the roads and rides through the forest met. And here

was the piqueur with his dogs, like a spider in the middle of his web, arranging his plan of campaign, and assigning to each his station. And as the silent forest echoed to the cry of dogs and blare of horns, and horsemen galloped here and there, and gay costumes glittered among the trees, the whole formed a pleasant and effective spectacle from the human point of view. What the "sanglier" thought of it is another matter.

For after all, the affair was more of a battue than a hunt, the boars often shot down in front of the hounds, or when brought to bay, quietly settled by the piqueur's carbine. Still there was just a spice of danger to season the sport, for a wounded sanglier is not to be disposed of like a fox or a hare, and when the "mother of the forest" charged out upon the carriages, followed by a very herd of young sounders, there followed a stampede among the spectators that caused many a cheek to blanch.

The Prince, who in public passed simply as Monsieur Paulson, had been stationed near the edge of the forest, where possibly the herd might attempt to break away. And Monsieur D'Antin was just visible through the trees. The cry of dogs and the winding of horns now sounded faint in the distance, and the Prince seated himself under a tree, and seemed to wait events. He amused himself meanwhile by dissecting one of the cartridges supplied by his host, and smiled bitterly as he rubbed the pretended bullet to powder in his fingers.

"It only wanted that," he muttered, "and now obedience!" And leaving his gun where it lay, but loosening a knife in its sheath, he walked towards his victim. D'Antin saw the glitter of his eye, and shouted to him to keep off.

"Take care of thyself, traitor!" cried the Prince.

D'Antin fired, and the Prince staggered, but rushed on more fiercely; he evaded a sweeping blow from the other's clubbed rifle, and the two closed together and fell heavily to the ground.

Cautiously approaching from different parts of the forest, a number of police agents, whose blue peasants' blouses concealed their short swords and revolvers, had gradually enclosed the space within which the Prince had been stationed. They saw him at last sitting on the ground, his back resting against a tree as if fatigued. Stalking him cautiously, and taking advantage of every tuft and bush, some half-dozen came within reach of the seated figure and made a rush upon it. "You are my prisoner," cried the chief, seizing the Prince by the arm. But he made no movement; he was dead.

A little further on lay the body of D'Antin, his face still contorted with the hate and fury of the death-struggle. The brigadier of gendarmes looked from one to the other with something of admiration in his glance. "Men of this stamp," he cried, "can do anything!"

CHAPTER X. IN A SECRET PRISON.

Leaving England in the first instance for Brussels, a run across the Continent to Lisbon, where he would find a quick boat to carry him to the African coast, did not seem to be anything like a difficult undertaking. But at the first station the train stopped at over the Belgian frontier, the carriage door had been opened, and Charles invited to step out. "I have nothing dutiable," he said, offering the key of his portmanteau. But it was no affair of the Custom House. He saw with anger and indignation the train depart without him, and when he was at last conducted before a respectable police commissary, he did not fail to express his feelings freely. But that official, calmly regarding him through his spectacles, proceeded to fold a margin on the flimsy official paper, and began to put the usual questions, "Your name and Christian name, age, occupation," and so on. Now, unluckily, Charles, for the sake of avoiding observation, had assumed the travelling name of Charles Thompson. "Having begun with it, better stick to it," he said to himself. But his slight hesitation had not escaped the keen professional ear.

Thus launched upon a career of deception, and desirous above all things to conceal his real status and destination, he began to flounder hopelessly in the mesh of official interrogatories; and he felt himself that the commissary had every reason to regard him as a suspicious character. Then he was told that he had been denounced as a spy, and that the evidence against him justified his arrest. And presently he found himself in the condition of a prisoner, stripped and searched, and finally locked up in an evil-smelling cell, where he was made as comfortable, however, as circumstances permitted. In the morning he was marched between two policemen to a bald-looking court-house in the centre

of the town, and presently introduced to the investigating Judge in a rather snug little room almost filled with a wide table, on which were piled a number of objects he recognised as having once belonged to him. At the present moment he felt that nothing belonged to him, and that he could hardly call his soul his own.

There was a shirt-collar with the name Tyrrel marked in full, a railway map marked with crosses where he had been told there was a good "buffet," and a guide-book with the usual plans. And there were his despatches carefully sealed as he had received them.

"Break the seals," said the Judge curtly.

Charles declined with a gesture. The Judge broke the seal himself and spread out the contents. To his great relief Charles saw that all the despatches were in cypher. It was a tough job to interpret that cypher even when one had the key, which was a sentence Charles had to learn by heart. There were several hundred thousand permutations for each letter, and it was calculated that it would take years to decipher a syllable without the key. Hence as long as he held his tongue the secret was safe.

But the Judge seemed to regard these secret despatches as convincing proofs of the accusation of being a spy. The case was serious, and important revelations might be expected after a little pressure had been put upon the culprit. And this report he sent with all the documents to his brother Judge of the superior Court at the nearest assize town, who failing to make any more out of the prisoner, remanded him "au secret"; and it was while being shifted from one prison to another that he recognised the voice and hand of May.

But if solitude were irksome, still more so were the constant perquisitions of the examining Judge, who was untiring in his efforts, either by cajolery or menace, to induce Charles to reveal the contents of his despatches.

"If they are innocent, why not reveal them? Your persistence denotes a guilty conscience!"

But Charles's native obstinacy prevailed, nothing could be got out of him; and at last in despair the Judge announced that he should leave him for trial at the next assizes, when a country jury, who detested spies, would be sure to find a verdict against him, and when outraged justice would sentence him to at least five years' imprisonment.

Again he was one day turned out of his solitary cell to visit that indefatigable Judge. But this time his manner was entirely changed; he was courteous, complaisant, offered a cigar and the morning paper. Charles suspected a snare, and retained a mistrustful attitude.

"You see," said the Judge amicably, "the paragraph in our foreign intelligence: 'The disputed questions of boundary in our African possessions have at last been settled, we fear, too much to the satisfaction of our susceptible neighbours.'

"Does not that interest you?" asked the Judge archly. "Then you, perhaps, will be more affected by the news that orders have been received to set you at liberty forthwith. So now you can proceed on your mission, and I have only to wish you 'bon voyage.'"

"One moment," cried Charles; "can't you tell me who put you upon my track?"

The Judge shrugged his shoulders.

"Probably you had friends about you interested in your movements. Another question in return. How did you contrive, in spite of all our precautions, to exchange signals with a young lady?"

"Ah, that young lady," cried Charles. "On my honour it was accidental. But can you tell me where she was going?"

"To the Château D'Antin," replied the Judge kindly. "You are going that way yourself, perhaps? Well, take care not to get into another wasps' nest. Again 'bon voyage.'"

CHAPTER XI. A TRUE LOVER'S KNOT.

NEVER was arrival more opportune than that of Charles Tyrrel at the gate of the old Château. May had seen him coming from afar, scarcely at first believing in the evidence of her eyes, and ran to meet him ere the great bell had ceased clanking. He held out his arms yearningly, and she flew to their shelter.

"You will take me home, Charles!" she cried.

For the Château was in the direst confusion. Death is a serious thing, no doubt, but debt is more serious still in the eyes of the paysan, and a little swarm of creditors surrounded the doors whence the funeral convoi of the Marquis D'Antin had not long departed. The farmer was there who had advanced his savings to his landlord; the innkeeper and general dealer of the village, red-faced and thick-voiced, who took his seat on the steps and vowed that nothing should pass out till he was settled with. And there was an uneasy feeling

about that sacrés English spies were at the bottom of the whole catastrophe. May was hooted if she showed herself at the window, and Zamora in crossing the court was pelted with stones by the children.

For poor Julie, whose grief had been most heartrending, there was much consolation in the arrival of her grey-headed father, from whom she had long been estranged. He was secretly a little relieved that his son-in-law had departed from the world without open scandal. His home—a lovely mansion on the bank of the river—was open to receive her. Henceforth he would speak with pride of "my daughter la marquise." But Julie's guests were an embarrassment! Hence was Charles doubly welcome on his arrival.

Horses and carriages were alike unavailable, imprisoned by a detachment of creditors, but Charles had retained the conveyance that brought him from the station, which was now waiting in the avenue. The burly innkeeper was at first inclined to dispute the passage out of May's baggage, and to claim a right of examination, but shamed by Gruchet's exclamation: "What, open a lady's trunks!" he grudgingly moved aside. And the driver whipped his horses into a gallop before the little crowd had made up its mind to hostile demonstrations, and Zamora, who had been almost pale while this was going on, shook her fist triumphantly at the gaping rustics.

Once more the grey towers of Windsor are in sight; but here a sad piece of news awaits the return of the travellers. The good old Major is dead. He passed away peaceably in the night—the last night of all—and they laid the old warrior to rest in the quiet churchyard of the Berkshire village, where tablets and old monuments told of others of the race, and a plain marble slab in the chancel recorded the fate of Hugh Wyvern, "treacherously slain in the wilds of Africa." And in the freshly-turned mould was buried all memory of former wrongs, for if Zamora knows, she will never tell; for is not her beloved Missie May now still more beloved as the wife of Charles Tyrrel?

They were married quietly in a City church the day after the Major's funeral, for there was no longer a home for May in the Castle Ward, and the quaint old house awaited the coming of another old warrior Knight. It was with terrible misgivings as to the future that Charles took this rash step. Zamora affirmed that she had married them quite effectually, and that the rest was superfluous; but hardly had they reached a little cottage by the river, which a friend had lent to Charles for the honeymoon, when May, full of curiosity, brought out a mysterious package which Madame D'Antin had thrust into her hands at parting. It was endorsed, "To be opened after Miss Wyvern's marriage," and was sealed with a seal that bore the Tyrrel device—a sheaf of arrows passant. And when opened a sheaf of bonds fell out, twenty-five thousand pounds in value, with the authority to transfer them on May Wyvern's marriage, signed Chas. Tyrrel.

"My dear old father. It is his wedding present. He forgives us, and gives us his blessing."

And Charles folded his young wife to his arms ecstatically. Zamora smiled a capacious smile as she witnessed their delight.

It did not so much matter now about Charles's diplomatic career, which Charles assured himself was quite ruined by his late fiasco. But quite otherwise. Lord Camus received his kinsman with effusive cordiality.

"You have shown, my dear boy," he said, "the supreme quality of a diplomatist, the capacity to hold his tongue. Had you made a fuss and appealed to us, as too many of your confrères would have done, you might have embroiled two powerful nations whose best interests lie in peace and good will. Rely upon us to push your interests."

The next day they were upon the river, autumn still lingering in the woods, and the foliage in all the glory of its dying leaves, that the first winter gale would scatter. How quiet and peaceable it all was; the round tower of Windsor just visible over the trees, the standard hanging motionless; the birds all silent, and only the hum of a distant threshing-machine in the air.

Charles was stretched at the bottom of the punt, which was moored to an old willow root; his head in his wife's lap, who was weaving a chaplet of water weeds to crown him as a river god. Zamora was crouched at their feet, and busied over Charles's disengaged wrist with a little pointed shell and ivory hammer. She was finishing a tattooed charm about the previous incision which was to secure long life, prosperity, and all sorts of good things to the young couple.

"Now, master, him finished," said Zamora proudly.

"Do you call that a fetish?" said Charles, lazily regarding the device. "I should say it was a true lover's knot."

AUTUMN LEAVES.

WORTH A GUINEA.

CHAPTER I.

BERNARD GRAVES was tall and good-looking, though not handsome enough to be noticed in a crowd, for the casual observer does not pause to admire an expression which denotes merely a manly and straightforward nature. His own personal appearance was, however, far from his thoughts at this moment, for he was in a London lodging seated by a horsehair sofa on which his mother, a delicate-looking lady, was resting, and the two were earnestly conversing.

"You had better go, my boy," Mrs. Graves said gently, laying her hand in that of the young man. "You must not think of me, indeed you must not. This opening in the Natal Mounted Police offers you exactly the life you would most enjoy."

"I'm not going to leave you, mother, so put that thought out of your head. I only wish I had not been so con——so idle, for now there seems nothing I can do here. I'm not even fit to be a clerk, as I never could add up a column of figures and make it come twice alike; and besides, those German fellows, who are as short-sighted as moles, get first chance at the offices because they can spout French and write it like natives. There's nothing I can do in England, and yet I'm determined to stick to the old country."

These two had each other, so they could still make light of their heavy misfortunes. Bernard again registered a vow that nothing should part him from his widowed mother. She had but him to comfort her, and her life hung on a thread.

"Mr. Samson has been very kind, and I do hope he will have found something for me to do," continued Bernard. "He promised to be here by six o'clock. After all, mother, it isn't the first time people have lost all their money, and as long as we can rub on we will not be dependent on any one."

"Sarah," to the little lodging-house maid, "if Mr. Samson calls, show him up without leaving him on the door-mat."

"Please, sir, will it be his Christian name?" asked Sarah.

Before Bernard could ease Sarah's mind on this point there was a sound of the door-bell, and so, leaving her heavy tray on the next landing, she ran down to answer it.

Mr. Samson was a lawyer. He was not an old family friend, but having been called in by Mrs. Graves to see what could be saved out of the general ruin, he had been much interested both in mother and son, and had done all he could to secure to her a small remnant of her fortune.

"That is kind of you," said Mrs. Graves, holding out her thin white hand. "You are really a friend in need—and you have known so little of us, Mr. Samson."

Mr. Samson was a shy man. He deprecated thanks with a motion of his hand, and then, after greeting Bernard, he sat down himself, and then tried to find a safe resting-place for his hat.

"I fear I have not been successful in finding anything which you would call suitable, or which, in fact, you are likely to accept, Mr. Graves."

"Indeed, I will accept anything," said Bernard. "I know I can't expect much, but I won't leave England, and I don't mean to starve."

"Ah, yes, just so, but—well, you have heard of Mr. Blackley——"

Who has not heard of Mr. Blackley's great establishment which can provide man, woman, and child, from birth to death, with every necessary and unnecessary requirement? But this time both mother and son remained silent, and Mr. Samson continued, in a slightly sarcastic tone:

"Just so. You say you would not mind sweeping a crossing, but to stand behind a counter—and yet let me assure you, Mr. Graves, that there are men there who have——"

"Forgive me," said Bernard, "I own that at the first moment I wished you could have found something better, but I have said I don't care what I do, and I mean it."

"I have personally known Mr. Blackley some years. He is just, sometimes even generous. He will undertake to find you a post, Mr. Graves, and he will put up with such qualifications as you possess—that is, which I hope you possess."

"Bernard is——"

"I mean," continued the lawyer, "punctuality, precision, unquestioning obedience, and an unfailing desire to oblige."

Bernard was once more full of fun.

"If he required twice this number of virtues I would try to cultivate them."

"Well spoken. Mrs. Graves, you must try and not discourage your son."

There was a flush of disappointed pride on the mother's pale face, but she schooled herself to hide it. Bernard was her only child, and he had always been so good to her.

"You have been more than kind, Mr. Samson. How can I put any hindrance in my boy's path?"

"Just so. Now I must leave you. Pray excuse a short visit. I shall see Mr. Blackley this evening, and he will expect to see you to-morrow at ten o'clock punctually."

When the door closed upon the lawyer, Mrs. Graves could not quite repress her feelings.

"Oh, Bernard, you a shopkeeper! No, you had better leave me."

"Why, mother, if I did, most likely I should keep a store at the antipodes, and where's the odds? I should lose you and gain what?"

"But no one would know you out there——"

"Well, that seems a poor sort of a reason. No, pride be hanged, mother. I shall come home every evening, and think of your sweet face awaiting me. You won't welcome me the less because I serve in a shop."

We may as well add that the interview with Mr. Blackley was satisfactory. This successful man was wont to be short and sharp with his new employés, but Mr. Samson had prepared the way. He received the young man very kindly, and to Bernard's great satisfaction he found that he should not have to measure out yards of silk to ladies, but that he would have to be a species of policeman. As a shop-walker his duties were manifold but not disagreeable. He was to arrive early and to enter the names of all the employés and the time of their arrival. He was to see that all was left in order in the evening, and he was to receive the customers and to conduct them to the counter where things they desired could be procured. Another of his duties was to keep a sharp look-out for light-handed customers, besides other occupations which time, as Mr. Blackley said, would teach him. It was certainly a post of trust, though by this time he had brought himself to see no objection to serving behind a counter; but Mr. Blackley in a few words showed him that to be a good salesman needed long training, and that, in fact, in that capacity, Mr. Bernard Graves would be useless to him.

"As for the post I offer you, I have fifty men anxious to take it, so I wish to speak plainly. Take it or leave it, but if you take it I shall require you to sign these rules. You see the last is that on an emergency you will not refuse to fill any post for which I require your services."

"In for a penny, in for a pound," thought Bernard, and taking up a pen he said: "Thank you—I accept. Shall I sign my name here?"

"If you please. You are a gentleman, and I am sure I can trust your word; but still, business is business, and sometimes——"

"I'll do my best," said Bernard, and this closed the interview. His salary was more than he had expected, and would make all the difference in the world to the happiness and well-being of his mother. In this way Bernard earned his first gold piece, and very soon he was able to feel a pride in doing his best in order to give full satisfaction to his employer.

CHAPTER II.

BERNARD had been at his new employment about a month when a slight incident occurred which brought back some of the regrets he felt at the loss of his money; regrets which he had earnestly tried to smother.

The London season was well advanced when one day a young lady, as she walked out of the shop, tripped over a stand and dropped all her parcels on the floor. Bernard, being close at hand, sprang to her assistance, and picking up her property returned it to her. She just glanced at him, not in the way, he thought, a young lady would look at a gentleman who had done her a service, but rather casually, that is, though she expressed her thanks very graciously.

"Thank you very much. It was stupid of me to let my things fall," she said, laughing softly.

By this time Bernard had, however, looked at her, and was suddenly fascinated by the charming expression of her face. She was not strikingly pretty, but there was something so pleasant about her and so taking that he was immediately captivated. Her figure, too, was perfect, and she looked the picture of health. In spite of himself Bernard found her face photographed on his memory, and as one of the things she had dropped was a card-case which had flown open and showed its contents, he managed to read the printed name: "Miss Iona Sudeley." In two minutes more she had stepped into a carriage which was waiting at the door, and Bernard saw her no more.

"I say, mother," he announced that evening, "I've seen a girl to-day who answers to my idea of perfection. She had a divine smile, and she walked like a goddess."

"Oh, Bernard! not a—young lady in the shop?"

"Her name is the only remembrance she left me, and that I discovered for myself, but it is one not easily forgotten—Miss Iona Sudeley."

"Sudeley? There was a General of that name who——"

"It doesn't the least matter what he did, for I shall never see her again."

"Why not? Mr. Blackley will soon find out your worth, and he will offer you a partnership."

Bernard laughed heartily.

"He would perhaps offer me his blessing, nothing more. As to Miss Iona Sudeley, she was gracious—you know some ladies who come are positively rude—but, nevertheless, she hardly looked at me. I say, mother, it's beastly hot this evening, and you look as if you wanted country air. When I get my ten days' holiday I wish we could go to the sea."

"We mustn't afford it, dear; every guinea is of importance to us."

"We must. I'm trying to make plans to earn a little more money."

Thus Bernard talked off his disappointment, and very soon he was as bright as ever, though all that evening he could not forget the face of Miss Iona Sudeley.

The next day Bernard was preparing to go off duty at the dinner-hour, when he received a summons to Mr. Blackley's private room. Unless something had gone wrong this was a very unusual request, and Bernard was somewhat concerned as he entered the great man's office. Mr. Blackley had the quick, decided manners of a very successful business man. He was not in the habit of wasting words, and now he merely nodded a hasty greeting.

"I am sorry to detain you a few minutes, Mr. Graves, but an order has come in, and I think that you are well fitted to supply the need."

"Yes, sir," said Bernard, who had already learnt that the fewest words gave the most satisfaction to his autocratic employer.

"Very well. I conclude that you have a dress coat and that you can dance?"

Bernard's looks expressed his astonishment.

"Well?" said Mr. Blackley impatiently. His time was precious.

"Yes, sir, but I fail to see——"

"That was not my question, I am coming to that. 'Here is the order: 'Can you supply one or two gentlemanly dancers for an evening party? Mrs. Meadowsweet's party will be spoilt if she cannot find a few more dancing men.' I have several in reserve, but you are the only man on the spot. I never give myself useless trouble, life is too short."

Bernard's face flushed to the roots of his hair.

"This hardly forms part of our agreement," he murmured.

Mr. Blackley immediately produced his printed form and showed Bernard his own signature.

"Excuse me. You agreed——but of course, I don't insist on any of our employés giving unwilling service. My time is short—yes, or no."

Bernard stared at his signature and then considered that, however strange the request might be, he had in fact promised to be ready for all emergencies. Here was one of them, an extraordinary one certainly, and one which he specially disliked, but after all——

"You will secure a guinea for an evening's pleasant exercise, Mr. Graves. Now, if you please, your answer?"

"Yes," said Bernard heartily. A guinea would add to the store he was laying up for his mother's holiday.

Bernard went home looking rather thoughtful, and somehow he found it impossible to tell his mother; indeed, at the last moment he merely announced that he was going out to a dance the next evening.

"Oh, Bernard, but where are you going? How very nice for you! I am extremely glad, as I was afraid people would have nothing more to do with us now that we are poor."

"Oh, it isn't any one I know. It's through some one at Blackley's," said Bernard, turning away to hide his confusion.

"Not a——"

"No, no, it's all right, mother."

Mrs. Graves was rather puzzled at this invitation, especially when Bernard mentioned the name, Mrs. Meadowsweet, in Causton Square.

"Well, dear boy, I hope you will enjoy yourself. You always were fond of dancing, and the girls were always delighted to have you for a partner."

'Oh, I'm only going to oblige an acquaintance, I shan't enjoy it."

Then Bernard changed the conversation, and his mother wondered why he had accepted this if he cared so little about it.

The next day Bernard found a card of invitation awaiting him on his desk, and on it was written "Please come early." All through the day the invitation hung heavy upon the young man's mind, and he wished many times that he had not promised to go, but it was too late to retract.

Mrs. Meadowsweet was a lady whose chief ambition was to be well spoken of by the élite. If any of her parties had been pronounced dull, she would certainly have fallen ill of disappointment. She not only made her receptions pleasant, but she spared no pains to make them famous. She knew that fashionable folk, who are so very difficult to please, said that people really enjoyed a dance at Mrs. Meadowsweet's. She never crowded the rooms, they said, with women—wallflowers they called them—whom no one could dance with; besides, at her parties, the men never refused to dance; they knew better than to give themselves airs. It was wonderful how she managed it, but the fact remained that hers was one of the few houses where all was not done for show but also for pleasure. On this special evening the scene was a brilliant one, for the lady's forethought had guarded against any probable dulness. Bernard had been received in a little downstairs sitting-room with these words:

"Ah, yes—Mr. Graves—how'd do? You will dance all the evening, if you please. I will introduce you to the right girls. There are some girls whom none of the fashionable young men will dance with. Thank you. Yes. I hear you are fond of dancing." "He almost looks like a gentleman," she added to herself, as she condescendingly enumerated her commands and noted Bernard's shy manner.

He heartily wished himself away, though he tried to see the fun of the situation; he felt much more inclined to run downstairs and to escape out of the house than to make himself universally agreeable. Very soon he was in a crush. Beautiful dresses if not beautiful girls surrounded him, he heard light banter around him, acquaintances greeted each other with counterfeited cordiality, and gentlemen were seen eagerly securing dances from the prettiest girls or from the best dancers. Suddenly Mrs. Meadowsweet introduced Bernard to one plain girl, then to others equally uninteresting. Mechanically he booked the dances and tried to make a few remarks, but he did not smile. However, his quiet gravity was apparently a recommendation, for suddenly Mrs. Meadowsweet was stopped by a lady with the request:

"Do introduce me to that very nice-looking fellow, Mrs. Meadowsweet. Iona would like to dance with him, I am sure. You know she is mad about dancing, and every one notices how well he dances."

"Oh, Iona gets so many partners, she wants no more. I never think of her, but——"

Then, afraid of refusing, to Bernard's intense horror, Mrs. Meadowsweet introduced him to the very girl who had so much attracted him in the shop. If she had been charming in morning attire she was now, he thought, perfectly angelic, and yet no one could be more simply dressed than she was. Bernard was almost tongue-tied as he saw her looking straight up into his face. Iona, seeing his evident shyness, helped him out in her soft, gentle manner as she spoke in the same sweet voice he had already admired.

"My aunt knows I love dancing. Thank you, I have not yet many dances filled up as we have only just come, and Mrs. Meadowsweet makes all the men fill up their cards early. She never forgives a man who stands at the door and looks on. It is nice of her. One can enjoy oneself so much more if one knows other girls are having a good time, and are not hating you for dancing."

Bernard's power of speech returned. He saw that she did not recognise him; indeed, how should she?

"Will you really give me a dance?" he asked. "It is too kind of you."

Iona laughed again.

"The favour is on your side. You don't look as if you cared to dance."

"I came on purpose," he said, rather bitterly.

Iona was enchanted.

"How nice of you to say so! Now I shan't feel you are doing it as a duty. Some of the men here treat one as a parcel to be whirled round for ten minutes and then dropped with pleasure at its destination."

"Not with you," said poor Bernard. "They couldn't think that, I'm sure they couldn't."

"It's kind of you to say that; but don't you know that the two American sisters

are here? You must know them, and they are the rage. Look, there they are, covered with diamonds. The men can talk of nothing else. They are immensely rich, and their father was a shopkeeper."

Bernard winced as he glanced at the ladies. He had not been introduced to them, and he was not sorry.

"Ah!"

"I declare you are not one bit interested. Shall we say the third and the seventh dance?"

"And the ninth too," said Bernard, "and then I shall nearly have filled up my card."

"You ought to keep just one in case you get the chance of dancing with one of the 'United States,'" she said, laughing softly.

With trembling fingers Bernard filled up the numbers she mentioned, and then his hostess claimed him in order to introduce him to a very stout young lady with imperceptible eyes. He bowed and murmured something about the pleasure of a dance, but his mind was full of Iona.

No need to chronicle his dances with others. All the time he was thinking only of Iona, and his partners forgave his silence because they found that his dancing was perfection. Mrs. Meadowsweet, hearing his praises, congratulated herself and silently praised her own cleverness, little guessing that "the young man who had come to dance" was going through a strange experience, and that he had fallen in love at first sight. His first dance with Iona was almost silent bliss. His second included supper, and in his eagerness to serve her he spilt a glass of champagne down her dress. Iona did not even exclaim impatiently as he apologised.

"I'm awfully sorry, I really am. Will you forgive me?" he asked, full of contrition.

"It's of no consequence whatever; please don't be sorry. Let's go into the ante-room, I will get a servant to wipe it off."

She put her hand on his arm, and then he was glad of the accident. The ante-room was cool and refreshing. It contained a pretty balcony full of flowers, and two chairs were placed there inviting them to sit down.

"How sweet! Let's sit here a minute, if you don't mind. Do you know it is very strange, but I seem to think that I have seen you before. I can't think where, and I don't remember your name at all."

Bernard felt his face flush all over. He longed to say straight out, "I was the man at Blackley's who picked up your parcels," but he dared not; for the sake of his hostess he must not say that, so he only murmured:

"I think we have met before."

"You are so unlike my ordinary partners that it is odd I can't remember the occasion."

"I don't think it is odd," he muttered. "I hardly ever go out to parties; in fact, I don't think I shall ever go to another."

"Oh, dear, then we shall not meet again, unless——"

"Not at parties," said Bernard, still more dejectedly.

"Well, perhaps at the sea. We are going to a little place called Porlock Weir. My uncle—I'm an orphan—hunts there. Last year the stag rushed close by me and swam out to sea, and the horrid fishermen rowed out and brought it back again. Do you know I cried so much when they brought the poor thing back to kill it on the beach. I offered them money to let it escape."

"Did you? I should never have killed it," said Bernard.

"That is nice of you. If you are near there you won't go out hunting?"

"My mother must go to the sea, but——"

"There is a delightful hotel there, and we have been to it, but this time we are going to take a whole house to ourselves. Girls often go out stag-hunting, but I never will."

"Our dance is over," said Bernard, "and I deprived you of it," he said regretfully.

"There is one more. You do dance so well. I see Captain Lacy is quite jealous of you because the two 'United States' noticed your dancing and wanted to be introduced to you. Shall I——"

"Oh no, no. I'm engaged—besides, indeed, I'm not in society."

"But you are. Don't you call this society? Mrs. Meadowsweet is very much sought after. I expect it was your beautiful dancing that made her ask you—or perhaps"—and Iona laughed—"perhaps you are very rich."

"I haven't a penny, and I work for my living."

"That's just what Mr. Cecil Reed said to me last night. He has about five thousand a year, and races, you know."

"Cecil Reed! I know him by hearsay, but I assure you that my poverty is a literal fact."

The music was heard and they were forced to go, for duty called Bernard to the

side of a very plain and awkward young lady who had Dutch blood in her veins, and stuttered painfully. His last dance with Iona Sudeley seemed to him the end of all things. After that the deluge.

"May I say—that I have enjoyed my dances with you immensely?" he murmured. "I shall never dance again—never, and so you will be the last bright spot in my life."

"Not dance again! Not if I am there? That will be unkind. But I don't quite believe that pretty speech! However, I always manage to see people again if I want to."

"Do you want to see me again?"

"Yes, I do," she said, half laughing. "You haven't said one silly thing to-night except about not dancing again, and you do enjoy dancing without looking bored."

"I was bored in between our dances. Good-bye; let me say it now, as we shall never meet again."

He spoke so earnestly that Iona looked up at him; something in that look, something in the expression of his face touched a hidden chord, and her own sweet truthful eyes seemed to say that if it depended on her they should meet again.

CHAPTER III.

BERNARD was certainly changed, so thought his mother, "and it dates," she said to herself, "from that day that he went to a dance." She could not make it out. He was silent, he brooded in the evening instead of laughing and talking over his day's experiences. Now and then he woke up and tried to be cheerful, but she could see that on those occasions his merriment was forced. What could be the matter with him? He must be feeling the strain and the irksomeness of this new work, and she must take him away to have a breath of sea air. So the fond mother meditated, but none of her speculations hit the truth. Bernard, on his side, was having a fierce if silent struggle. He called himself an idiot and a confounded ass, and other strong appellatives, for having fallen in love at first sight. He hated himself now for not having spoken the truth, and for not having told Iona where it was that she had seen him. He would then have seen her look of surprise, perhaps added to a haughtiness of manner which would have cured him. Well, he was thoroughly punished. Happily he should most likely never meet her again, at least he hoped that he should not do so.

A week passed, and he was still in this frame of mind, though happily for him he had to think of so many things during business hours that he could not entirely give himself up to ceaseless dreaming. As it was, he was twice reprimanded in an amiable manner by Mr. Blackley. Perhaps the worst moment was when the latter handed to him the guinea as the payment for his dance. He would willingly, had he dared, have returned it to him. Imagine being paid for dancing with Iona, for the sweetest moment life had or ever would give him! It was terrible, unheard-of, and the guinea became a load upon his conscience. What should he do with it? At last he carefully wrapped it up and put it in a corner of his purse, determined that nothing on earth should tempt him to use it.

One day, when the department over which Bernard presided was very full, an employé hastened up to him.

"Graves, have you got a pound in your pocket? There is a lady on the other side who wants to change a note, and I have it all but one pound. Here it is; do you mind attending to her, as I must go?"

"Certainly," said Bernard, and he hastened across to the opposite counter.

The lady turned suddenly, and he saw that Iona was facing him. For a moment she remained silent, whilst he felt his face flush painfully, and the whole place seemed to swim round with him. Outwardly he retained a cold impassibility.

"Here is your change," he said in a very low voice.

If he had not spoken, perhaps, Iona might have believed that she was face to face with Mr. Graves's double, but no other man could have the voice which had so much delighted her. She did not even like to think of all the little manœuvres she had gone through in order to find out the history of the Mr. Graves she had danced with. She had called on Mrs. Meadowsweet, and she had led up to the subject, but in vain. She had enquired of every acquaintance, and she had been told many imaginary histories of various Graves, but she had never met him again.

And now—and now—— She was too astonished to think much, she only wished to make sure that she was not dreaming.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, but are you—you must be Mr. Graves. It is kind of you to trouble yourself about my change. Are you going on, or——?"

Poor Bernard! If only she had not looked so lovely, so charming, and so natural; if only he had not lost his heart to her so completely; if only—— Further deceit was impossible to him; he had gone very near it the other night; now, he said to himself that whatever it might cost him he would be true. He might still pretend, and get her out of the shop; but no, why should he be ashamed of honest toil?

"Miss Sudeley, I am on duty here. I am one of Mr. Blackley's employés," he said simply, though in a low voice. He expected Iona to make some polite speech and to hasten away, but again he was mistaken in her.

"Do you know that it is a mere chance that I am here to-day? It was only because my aunt was tired that I promised to do this commission for her. I am glad to have met you again. I wanted to tell you——" As if by instinct they had turned into a small room now empty, as it was a repository for umbrellas and the weather was extremely fine.

"I have been also wishing to see you," he murmured, hardly knowing what he was saying.

"But—but—I don't quite understand. You know Mrs. Meadowsweet very well, I suppose. She wouldn't tell me about you the other day. Perhaps she thought——" and here Iona's soft laughter made poor Bernard wish the floor would open and bury him in ruins of lath and plaster.

"No, no; I don't know her; in fact—how can I tell you?"

"Oh, now I see. Why didn't you tell me the other evening? I said I had seen you before, and now I recollect. It was here. You helped me to pick up all my bundles."

"Yes; I know I ought to have told you——"

"Of course you ought. But—oh, Mr. Graves, you didn't really think me such a snob as to have minded, did you?"

"You are perfect; but don't you see how impossible it all is? You must despise me, but I must tell you that the other night I was paid for coming! There now; don't speak to me again if you despise me too much; but I promised Mr. Blackley to do all he required of me, and this was one of his requirements. But I can never do it again. You see what a false position it put me in, and—and—I have been too much punished. I thought it might help our slender means. My mother wants a holiday. We have had great trouble and great losses, and—well, of course, I'm not ashamed of working for her, you understand, but—but—but for her I was going to emigrate."

He spoke quickly, for he wanted to get it all over. He had not let her have time to answer, and again he hoped that she would leave him; and now that his conscience was at ease he should drive all thoughts of her out of his head.

Again he was surprised at the girl's next words. She raised her head slightly, thus showing off her slight figure to full advantage; then there came the sweetest imaginable smile on her lips, not the scornful smile he had expected to see, but one full of kindness, as she held out her hand to him.

"Indeed, Mr. Graves, you don't understand. If there is anything to be ashamed of, Mrs. Meadowsweet is the person to feel the shame. But you may trust me; I shall not reveal her secrets; and you seem to forget that a gentleman is one anywhere and everywhere, or rather, you forget that we women think so, and that we know a true man when we meet him. As for the rest, forgive me, I can't help laughing. It was funny, wasn't it?"

Her graciousness had made the shop a sort of paradise; nothing now seemed to matter, he even wanted her to think other than she did; he argued against himself as he said:

"But of course I was acting a lie. I was pretending that I was a man with money when it is just the opposite, and I was deceiving you, you who are a true woman."

"Then don't do it again. I must go; please tell me your mother's address. If she wants sea air, we are going to take a much bigger house than we need, and it would be a kindness if she would come and fill it."

Bernard shook his head.

"We shall go into very humble lodgings. But of course mother would like to see you. Would you really go and see her, Miss Sudeley? It is much worse for her, this change, than it is for me."

"If I might? As for this place, I wish my brother were here with you. The last time I heard from him he was a bus conductor in Brisbane, after running through a considerable fortune."

They parted, but not before, once more, she had looked up at him, and he had felt that the world contained but two women,

one his mother and the other this sweetest, most loveable, most noble Iona Sudeley.

"Bernard, my dear boy, now I know the mystery! She has been here; she has told me all about it, and she insists on our paying her a visit by the seaside."

Bernard remonstrated, refused, abjured, but in the end he gave in for his mother's sake, and one day found them both by the seaside in a lovely house overlooking wooded cliffs and rocky promontory. Iona's uncle and aunt were the kindest, simplest people on the face of the earth. Her unworldliness, though not acquired, had been fostered by her adopted parents. The story of Bernard's party which she had told them, had made him a hero in their eyes, and as for the rest——

Perhaps the ending is commonplace; the falling in love of these two had been begun under strange circumstances, but the end was not quite so extraordinary as the beginning. Bernard was proud and would not give up his work, neither would he ask a rich woman to be his wife, but somehow or other the old people put their fingers into that pie, and Iona had to declare that Bernard should not leave off his work for her, but that she would live in London with him.

"One thing, Bernard, you shall give me. I am going to have that sovereign set as a brooch and wear it always. You see it was the price of my husband! Without that I should never have married you."

"Without it I should never have known what a woman's love means. My sweetest! You shall have it if you like, though I must say that it was the hardest money I ever earned in my life."

Iona would not let Bernard's mother live anywhere but with them. Their pretty little London house was a place where there was always sunshine. Every day Bernard went off to his work with a happy look on his face. He said that now he was too happy, and if any one suggested his giving up his post, he would answer:

"Why should I? Mr. Blackley can't do without me, my salary is excellent, and as any lucrative situation is difficult to obtain, I shall not lightly put myself out of work."

Mrs. Graves sometimes complains, but Mr. Samson never ceases to hold Bernard up as an example, and it is whispered that he means to make Bernard Graves his heir.

"THE UNSEEN PRESENCE."

CHAPTER I.

His people had never quite forgiven him. At first Nell had fretted a little, when she had learned to fully appreciate the enormity of the offence she had committed, when she, the little light-comedy actress, had promised to marry Leigh Ridout, of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in the North. It was true that he was only a younger son, but that did not count with his family, in regard to his relations with other less divinely favoured people than themselves. But after a time, when Nell learned to measure the worth of her husband from a purely outside point of view than that of his family connexions, she troubled no more.

How she herself had ever had the courage or audacity to marry that taciturn, sad-eyed artilleryman, Major Ridout, she, the merriest, most pleasure-loving of a gay, pleasure-loving set, she scarcely knew herself. She was as pretty, and winsome, and full of fun as a kitten.

Her own friends, while fully appreciating the worldly advantages of her marriage with a rich, well-born man, one of the smartest officers of one of the smartest branches of the service, still considered that she had thrown herself away.

Certainly, she changed a good deal after her marriage, though few could have defined in what the change consisted. She still had a laugh and a light word always ready, though the old careless, unthinking enjoyment no longer seemed to radiate from her like summer sunshine itself. She was a great favourite with her husband's brother officers and their wives, and in consequence led a gay and sociable life. Her husband had at one time almost entirely withdrawn himself from society, but he was only too happy to see her happy, and resignedly went out with her as much as she wished; a great deal too much, in the opinion of his family. They called her silly and frivolous.

She and Ridout had been married now nearly two years. It was the autumn. The summer had been unusually hot; almost too hot in the seaside garrison town where her husband was stationed. After the brilliant sunshine, the vivid skies, the white glare of cliff of that long summer, this grey, misty autumn evening was a rest and refreshing to Nell's tired frame and wearied brain. She drew in a long breath

as she came out of her house in the dusk of the evening twilight. It was about eight o'clock; there were few people passing. The lamps had been lit in the houses surrounding the square; they shone cheerfully—like the stars of the small worlds of home life which they lighted—through the misty air, suggesting the dear and familiar details of that simple everyday life which gathers about the hearths and homes of human beings. But that pale, soft sea-mist fell like a grey, impassable veil between her, as she stood on the steps of her own house, and those other lamp-lit homes, and seemed to shut her off from their beloved commonplaces of daily existence as with a vague, eerie mystery.

She stood for a moment, the look in her eyes which had come there a few moments before—when, on entering her husband's study after dinner, she had found that he had unexpectedly left it—still darkening them with its anguish of fear and questioning. No one ever saw that expression in them; it only came when she was alone. But during the past few months it had always been lurking there, though she had hidden it cleverly with her smiles and merry chatter. To-night, as she stood there, that fear seemed to have taken complete possession of her. Her face paled, her eyes gazed out through the mist stealing, gentle, intangible, suffocating, up about her, as if she felt in it some unspeakable horror of peril and evil.

A soldier, whistling the last new music-hall ditty, came down the hill from the Castle. The brisk, regular tramp of his feet, the lively air, roused her. She pulled to the door behind her, and went out to search for her husband. She made her way down to the sea. The first Mrs. Leigh Ridout—her husband had been a widower—would never have ventured upon such a thing; at that hour in the evening, too. She never ventured upon anything where her husband and his family were concerned. She was a wife of their own choosing. Birth, fortune, character had been eminently suitable, and his own people had practically made up the match. She never went into her husband's study when he wished to be quiet. She never dragged him out to ride and drive with her when he wished to remain at home. She never worried him to accompany her from one entertainment to another when he looked tired and depressed. Leigh Ridout's family considered that the present Mrs. Ridout treated him with a scandalous want of respect and sympathy.

Nell was thinking of that first wife now; she often thought of her. Her youngest sister-in-law, more garrulous, and with the need of talking freely more gracious, had enlightened her—rather more, perhaps, than she really knew—as to the ways, character, and habits of that favoured bride. She had been apparently a meek, nervous kind of girl, and had died about a year after her marriage. There had been painful circumstances attending her last illness and death, upon which even the garrulous sister-in-law kept a discreet and profound silence. But there was a niece—a bright, honest-eyed girl of sixteen, the daughter of Lady Gregory, the eldest sister—who, unsuspected by her family, had gathered up odds and ends of gossip repeated thoughtlessly before her by her nurses when she was a child, and which she had rattled off carelessly one day to the second Mrs. Leigh Ridout, on one of the few visits she had paid her husband's family.

"Aunt Annabel was frightened of Uncle Leigh. Are you frightened of him? I don't believe you are. I suppose that is what mother means when she says you have not the proper respect for your husband," with a mischievous laugh. "I shan't have any for mine, if it means being frightened out of your wits at him. Aunt Annabel took quite a dislike to poor Uncle Leigh before she died, and though he does look so sad and stern, he was awfully good to her. He's a dear, and if ever I find another man like him I shall marry him, and in spite of mother and Aunt Emma, make him 'take me round' like you do Uncle Leigh."

Nell had laughed, but the laugh had died away rather abruptly as she suddenly wondered how long that gay, light-hearted, happy girl would have borne the burden at which she hinted so unconsciously. Nell had been as light-hearted when she had first resolved upon making her husband share her life, and not live his own apart from her. Now, to-day, the effort seemed to have left her tired to death. And perhaps, after all, he had loved his first wife best; she asked herself that to-night. Sometimes she had been filled with dread lest she should alienate him from her by her conduct; then she had crushed self into the background again, and gone on doggedly in the path she had set her feet to travel. At all costs she would force him to live her life, not that dreary, isolated one of his own.

She met few people out at that hour of the autumn evening. As she left her house

she had caught a glimpse of an old woman leading a child. They were walking on the other side of the way. They were passing under a street lamp when she first saw them, and she noticed mechanically that the woman was a mulatto, and looked very old. She could not see the child's face.

She went on, forgetting all about them, till just as she was crossing the street to reach the Parade, she saw them again close behind her. An odd, unaccountable fancy struck her that they were following her; but it passed, as at that moment she thought she caught sight of her husband on the Parade. She hurried on to overtake him, and when she glanced back the woman and child had disappeared into the shadows of the autumn evening. The Parade at that end was deserted; there was no figure except that of her husband's in sight.

The sea lay still as a deep lake of enchanted water. A shaft of silver light from the rising moon pierced the heavy, misty air like the shining lance of some angel-spear, and striking the sea, touched where it fell the dark waters into radiance.

But Ridout, who had stopped and was looking out to sea, saw nothing of the growing light till his wife's hand touched him. Then he turned with a frowning start, and saw the moonlight shining on her face. Something dark lifted from his own as he recognised her.

"It was so close and suffocating indoors," she said, "so I came out for a walk. I found you had gone out, and as I knew you weren't going to Colonel Maple's till half-past nine, I thought I might find you here!"

She spoke lightly, still keeping her hand on his arm. He looked at her a little queerly, but he replied in the same matter-of-fact strain. Then he suggested they should stroll on to the end of the Parade. They walked on, leaving the town behind. And as they went together, the mist-laden air seemed to grow lighter and clearer. The moon rising higher, shone down in fuller radiance. A faint breeze sprang up and stirred the sullen surface of the sea, which broke into little ripples in the moonlight. They walked side by side, talking over some prospective changes that were to take place in his battery, and of the future arrangements they would have to make. But though she walked close to his side, she seemed to feel between them always that vague, impalpable shape of mystery, horrible because of its very intangibleness, which had walked between her and her husband ever since the day of their marriage. It seemed as if she had never felt it so strongly as she did to-night.

So keenly was she conscious of it, that once for an instant she actually fancied that she saw it take bodily shape in the twilight of the autumn evening. She started and swerved aside a step, as something—a shadow, a wreath of pale, chill mist—floated between them.

"What is it, Nell?" asked Ridout, glancing down at her.

She laughed, but still looked with a half-shrinking curiosity behind her.

The long Parade with its lights was silent and deserted. The shrill noisy scream of a steamer off the pier whistling for a pilot brought a sense of positive relief, as she found herself once more in a world of material and familiar things.

"It's nothing, Leigh," slipping her hand into his arm. "I always think there is something ghostly about the shadows and effects of autumn evenings. What a strange noise the sea seems to be making to-night as it breaks on the shingle! It's like whispering, threatening voices. Isn't it silly? I feel so fanciful to-night. Perhaps there is something wrong with me!" with a little half-hysterical laugh, and catching at her breath. "The long hot summer has tried me"—hastily—"I mean. I'm all right, dear, of course," as he stopped and scanned her face anxiously through the dark. "I dare say it was that book on fetish that I found in your study this afternoon. I opened it and read some of it, but the stories in it were so horrid that they made me creep!" with a half-mock, half-real shudder. "They put all sorts of ugly thoughts into one's brain, even to thinking that evil can triumph over good! It is so silly—and wicked." Then as he still looked at her with that strained intenseness, she tried to speak more lightly. "It is really too ridiculous to be so nonsensical! The stupid book must have taken possession of me!" And she laughingly told him of the mulatto woman and the child she had seen, and of the absurd fancy she had had for a moment about her.

"I wonder who she is. Somebody's nurse, I suppose. She seemed to take an interest in me, any way, for she looked hard at me when I first caught sight of her. Perhaps she didn't guess I was an old married woman, and did not think it

right of me to be walking out alone at this time of the evening."

She chattered on, more for the sake of speaking than for anything else. Any foolishness, any triviality, any absurdity, sufficed to make talk when she wished to rouse him from those sombre moods which she so dreaded. Whether she irritated, angered, disgusted him, she never cared. She never ceased till she saw the cloud lighten from his eyes, and she felt that once more she had driven back across the threshold of his soul that vague, intangible foe, whose horrible presence she could feel, though it took no definite shape. That her husband had a dark and unhappy secret in his life she divined. That this invisible shape of terror against which she was ever fighting was born of that secret, she divined too. That was all. She was not prepared for the effect her careless chatter aroused in him to-night. He stopped. They had reached the end of the Parade, and were strolling back. His face looked white and almost cruel in its set sternness.

"Nell, I wish you would understand, once for all, that I do not like you to walk alone after dark. It is not fit for you; it is not safe."

"Leigh," answering the look, the tone, rather than the words, "I——"

"I will not have it, Nell. I have told you before I did not—like it. It isn't right. I hate to feel that you are walking out alone, any time—and in the dark!——"

He broke off abruptly and walked on. She did not say another word. His face was pale and rigid with that set resolve of purpose. Hers was white, too, with a bewilderment of pain.

As they entered the house, his eyes fell on her, and he noticed her pallor in the lamplight. The frozen sternness of his face softened, and a rush of passionate tenderness swept over it.

"My dear! How tired you look!" he exclaimed. She turned quickly aside and entered the drawing-room. He followed, suddenly realising how harsh his manner and words must have seemed to her. "Good Heavens!" he said under his breath. Then closing the door, he went up to her, as she stood slowly pulling off her gloves with that frightened, stricken look in her face. "Nell!" he began hoarsely.

She looked up at him, and saw his heart in his eyes. The hot blood flamed into her face, and the ugly doubt that had chilled her own heart was swept away in the rush of thankful happiness.

"Leigh, I know it isn't so, but just let me hear it with your own lips, and I'll never doubt you again. I don't doubt you now, only it is so nice to hear you say that you, Leigh—— It isn't because you think that it is not fitting for the wife of a Ridout to walk about in the dark, but because you love me, and don't want any harm to happen to me, your wife! Not that you are afraid I should lower the dignity and upset the proprieties of the family of Ridout!" with a happy laugh, which yet had the faintest little sob in it.

He caught her in his arms and kissed her.

"Hang the family of Ridout!" he said, with a hoarse laugh.

CHAPTER II.

It was a fortnight later; the hardest fortnight that Nell had gone through since she had first discovered that her husband was haunted. For that was how she whispered it to herself. Hitherto she had always succeeded in rousing him from one of those dark moods when they took possession of him. This time she failed. He was abstracted, taciturn; he seemed even to go about his work mechanically; he was a soldier to the backbone, and hitherto had taken a keen interest in his duties. He seemed, too, to have a positive dislike to her going outside the house, and if she went, would not allow her to go alone. All her efforts to drive that sombre look from his eyes were vain. She felt vaguely that her invisible foe was gaining ground. She struggled desperately against it. She was really feeling ill, and this last valiant effort to combat the dark spirit which seemed to enter into her husband, and still more its failure, exhausted her completely.

He saw her growing paler and more delicate-looking, and the misery in his own heart increased tenfold.

One evening she went up to bed early; she pulled aside the blind of her window to look out. A brilliant moon was shining. As its light flooded the square, it gave an unnatural silvery whiteness to the ground. An old woman leading a child was crossing the square, going down towards the sea. Their figures stood out clear and almost startlingly distinct against the surrounding brilliance of whiteness. Their backs were

turned to her, but something in their appearance made her think of the mulatto woman and the child she had noticed that evening a fortnight ago. She had not seen them since. She dropped the blind, too tired to feel any interest in them, or, indeed, anything else. She fell asleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillows. She slept on in dreamless, refreshing slumber for some hours. Then she began to awake. The remembrance of the woman and child who had caught her passing attention before going to rest, returned to her half conscious brain. They seemed now to pass into her dreams. They were standing at the foot of her bed looking at her. Their persistent presence began to worry her. It irritated her at last so much in her dream that she sat up to tell her husband to drive them away. The action awakened her completely, and she saw that her husband was not by her side. The clock at the same moment struck out two. She sprang out of bed, flung a dressing gown round her, and hastened downstairs.

The house was dark and silent But from under the door of her husband's study gleamed a ray of light. He was there. For a second she clung to the baluster for support, then hastened on. She listened outside the door; she fancied she caught a faint sound—was it a sob of a man's mortal anguish? She tried the handle of the door. It was locked. She called her husband by his name, first with an effort at calmness; after a pause, during which there was no sound or stir, as if the person inside the room sat arrested by the shock of her unexpected presence—with the whole anguish of her own heart and brain in the low cry.

Then her husband came and opened to her. She caught at him, and after another of those strained pauses, when it seemed as if the very blood in his veins were arrested, and that the eternal coldness and stillness of death were already upon him, he took her in his arms and carried her over to his writing-table, where he sat down, still gathering her to his breast.

He had been writing, but his work was finished. One or two letters lay on the table, one addressed to her. She raised her head from his shoulder, where she had hidden it in the first moment, like a child beside itself in a paroxysm of fear, and saw the letter. A newspaper, hastily flung on the table as he rose to let her in, lay near it. With every sense a hundredfold sharpened by her pain and terror, she had, while she waited outside the door for him to open to her, caught the sound of the faint, hurried rustling of the paper. She glanced from the letter to it. Then, before he could stop her, she swept the paper aside. A revolver lay under it, and the nameless foe against which she had fought so long on her husband's side took tangible, material shape at last. Her husband was a would-be suicide. Before its horror she uttered a low moan, and flinging her arms round his neck, she broke into crying, sobbing out half-choked questions, entreaties, reproaches. He sat stricken dumb before her anguish, but the sullen look of determination and suffering did not lighten from his eyes.

He held her close, and the suffering deepened in his face, as his heart seemed wrung to breaking. But he was fixed in his resolve. He had fought bravely, doggedly, even desperately all these years against the Nemesis, human, ghostly, devilish—whatever it was—that had been slowly tracking him down to this. He would make an end now. For himself he did not care. It was for her, his beloved, whom he was holding, as she sobbed out her love and her anguish, to his heart. The curse should not fall on her if his death could avert it, if his sacrifice could appease the fiend who tormented him. He only wondered now why he had not done it long ago. That wretched yellow woman's curse had worked well. His best friend had turned from him and met a violent death; his most faithful servant, the man who had since his boyhood followed his fortunes, had learned to mistrust and hate him. The wife he had married—that poor little wife to whom he had been as kind as he knew how to be, though he had never loved her—had taken a horror of him, and had died in an attack of melancholia by her own hand, and the child she had borne had faded away too. It may have been only a hideous chain of coincidences, but it had been. And no man in whose life they had taken place should have committed this last unpardonable sin of all—that of taking this tender, loving, innocent woman, this wife whom he loved better than his own soul, into his blasted life. For the curse would fall on her too. "On all whom you love, on all whom you trust. Those you love shall turn from you in hate and fear; those whom you trust shall deceive you; those for whom you would give your heart's life shall die before your eyes. And you shall

know that it is the curse working, for the sake of the heart you have broken here." He could see the old woman now, the grandmother of the girl he had ruined and then cast off—cast off because, though she was beautiful as any woman of his own country and race, she had black blood in her veins, and came of a stock too low to mingle with the family of Ridout. Though she loved him, he had flung her aside, and driven her to her death, for she had killed herself in her despair.

It was years ago, but he could see the woman who had avenged her, now, standing as she stood that evening in the moonlight, on the verandah of the West Indian home which for a year had been an earthly paradise to him and the girl who had trusted him and whom he had betrayed. And the woman had cursed him and gone away. She was dead, and the child was dead, and its mother was dead by her own hand. Without doubt it seemed. He had made enquiries when he found that the curse was actually and horribly working itself out in his life. He had never seen any of them again. But as sure as he was a living man he had felt the presence of that something, creature or fiend, who had haunted him to his ceaseless tormenting over and over again. It, whatever it was, had almost driven him to madness, crime, suicide, suggesting nameless evils to his brain, and despair to his heart. But though he himself had never again seen with physical sight that embodied curse, others had; all those whom he had best loved and trusted. They had learned to hate him, and had died. And it took always one shape, an old mulatto woman leading a child by the hand. And this—his heart's beloved, his wife—had seen them at last too; and her love would turn into hatred—and perhaps she would die. He could bear it no more. He would die in her place; perhaps then the curse might end too.

"It is what that creature — monster, devil, living or dead—what it is, I cannot say—has been goading me into doing all these years. But I have held out; I felt I should be a coward to yield to its tempting and tormenting. And since I have been married to you, it has redoubled its efforts. Over and over again, but for you helping and comforting me, I should have given in. So long as you were safe from that awful influence, I could bear it. Now you have seen—too—and—I can bear no more."

She forced the story from him at last. She uttered no word of condemnation. For explanation she had none to give. It might have been but a morbid fancy, born of the remorse of an over-sensitive soul for a great crime. It might have been the magnetic outside influence of a cruel, unscrupulous will on an imaginative brain and highly-strung nervous organisation. It might have been coincidence. It might have been some malignant unknown horror of spiritual evil. She did not know. She did not care, at this supreme moment. Only he must be saved. She clung to him, her tears wetting his cheek, her lips pressing close to his, her arms round his neck, her heart beating against his. She claimed him as her own. She defied any foe, living, dead, or devilish, to take him from her. She told him how she had fought all silently and secretly by his side. And then she used the last weapon in her armoury.

"Not for my sake only you must live, not even for your own, but for——" and she whispered something into his ear.

Something that made him utter a hoarse exclamation and catch her still closer to his breast, and then there was silence. When he at last raised his head, there was a new look in his eyes, and his cheek was wet, no longer with her tears alone.

A little later a child was born into their home.

Now whether the sweet, wholesome influence of that child life worked a marvel, as most child life does in the hearts and minds of mankind, or whether his wife's will, strong in her faithful love, strengthened his, or whether he had gathered up his own manhood, and in one mighty effort flung off once for all the morbid fancy—or malignant, unholy spell — cannot be said. Perhaps they all had something to do with it. It was certain that the woman and child were never seen again by any of those whom he loved, and who loved him, nor was that baleful presence ever felt again between Nell and her husband. It would not be surprising if the living child in his home had the greater share in the new and wholesome order of things, for it worked such marvels in the great family of Ridout that it may well have performed a miracle in that other matter.

It was promptly adopted and adored by uncles, aunts, and cousins, and led by its tiny feet, drawn by its tiny hands, Nell, as its mother, found herself at last gathered into the family as one of its own flesh and blood. Once across the threshold, her own sweetness and loveableness did the rest, and

the family secretly regretted having barricaded itself against her so long.

But perhaps only her husband ever knew the extent of the blessing she had brought upon the life of one member of it.

"TO-MORROW WILL BE FRIDAY."

PURFORD would be a mere, ordinary, commonplace little country town but for one thing; that is the old Priory. People of an antiquarian turn of mind drive any number of miles to visit it, and as this naturally brings a certain amount of grist to the mill, Purfordites are not wanting in pride and proper feeling towards this noble relic of the Gothic style, though the fact that it was originally founded by Papists is rather a bitter pill to some of the narrower-minded.

In spite of the ruined condition into which it has been allowed to fall—so that only a very small portion of the wonderfully groined roof of the chapel remains for disciples of the beautiful to rave about—it is still possible to mentally reconstruct the entire fabric, and populate it with either a sombre, stealthy-footed, black-robed order of religious recluses, or a jovial, rotund, shaven-pated community of ecclesiastical gourmands, according to taste.

Besides its own intrinsic merits, the Priory possesses the additional advantage of a situation in an extensive and well-wooded park which, encompassing it on three sides, forms an incomparable setting to the scene. An undulating expanse of green sward, broken here and there by magnificent chestnuts, lies between the antique gateway which opens on an unfrequented offshoot of the one wide, rambling, uphill street of which Purford consists, and the front of the old building.

It was about the last week in September that two young men—who are sufficiently designated by the names of Ted and Jack—tramped their way into the town. It was just that time in the afternoon when Purford seems to have the most difficulty in keeping its eyes open, and the pair having disinterred and interviewed one or two drowsy inhabitants on the subject of lodgings, were finally recommended to Mrs. Cuttle at the corndealer's, next door but two from the post-office.

Everything, terms included, having proved entirely satisfactory, the two friends soon found themselves partaking of a composite meal in the apartment which boasted an outlook over the High Street.

"I think we can manage to put in a day or two here very comfortably," remarked Jack, who was big, and fair, and indolent-looking. "Such a jolly, sleepy-looking little one-horse place! And the Priory! You're cracked on the subject of old ruins, and I reckoned on this keeping you quiet for the next day or two."

The other rose at the bait.

So they sallied forth. Five minutes was sufficient to bring them to the Priory gates, which were closed every night at dusk. As they were about to enter, Ted's attention was caught by a breach in the wall some twenty or thirty feet to the right.

"No great difficulty there in making your way in or out after the regulation hours," he observed, measuring the distance from the ground with his eye.

The beauty of the day was over. Great shadows lay across the fresh green turf, shadows that seemed to be cast less by the setting sun than by the spirit of solitude and mystery brooding over the ruin.

"Good old Priory!" remarked Jack patronisingly. "Those old monks had their lines cast in pleasant places. Shouldn't half have minded being a monk myself so long as there was none of the hair shirt or bread and water business. Ha, ha, ha!"

He laughed a hearty, deep-toned laugh which roused strange echoes in the deserted cloisters, as though the sound had been taken up and passed on by invisible lips until it died away among the mutilated columns and arches.

The cloisters lay to the left; on the right were the sacristy and chapter-house. These, with the refectory and the remains of offices and dormitories, constituted the main portion of the ancient ecclesiastical edifice. The chapel was a distinct building. Entering by the west doorway the visitors made their way along the nave, looking up, as they did, at that remnant of the exquisitely sculptured roof which time, the barbarian, had consented to spare. The great east window would have been a blank empty space but for the ivy which did its best to provide a substitute for the stained glass that had once filled it. Ivy, too, rollicked round what remained of the massive columns.

But it was already getting dusk, and, as they turned to go, they encountered on the threshold an ancient crone, in a lavender sun-bonnet, armed with a symbolic bunch of great rusty keys.

"Askin' yer parding, sirs, but time's up," she cackled. "I've bin out in the little bit o' kitching garding at the back, and never knowed as there was nobody about till jist this minnit, or I'd a' come and showed yer round."

They thanked her, but explained that they had managed very well.

"Ah, but yer wanted me to pint out and 'splain things, and I'd a' done it willin'. Lawk-a-mussy," she continued, "it's lucky as I didn't go off and lock yer in unbeknown! What would yer a' done then?"

"Stayed here until you came and let us out in the morning," hazarded Ted.

The puckered, leather-like visage lengthened, and she shook her head ominously.

"Ah, yer be strangers," she said, looking them up and down. "Strangers yer must be, or yer'd never talk like that, and on a Friday of all days in the week."

"I wonder what she means?" asked Ted as they followed her out.

"You come 'ere termorrer," she said, "and I'll show yer all there is to be seen, and tell yer what'll make yer blood cuddle."

Having secured the entrance by the means of a key containing metal enough to set up a dealer in old iron, she dropped a rheumatic curtsey and bade them "good day."

"Now, then," said Ted, as soon as she was out of sight, leading the way as he spoke to the breach in the wall, "there's nobody about, and I don't know what you mean to do, but I'm going over here."

The other followed, and they skirted the ruins and plunged into the dense, dark recesses of the wood beyond. Threading their way between the trunks, they continued for some time until they arrived at what was like a wood within a wood—a square, shallow, regular depression of the ground, like a dry tank, in which the trees grew so closely together that they shut out what was left of the daylight.

There was something eerie in the spot, something that defied analysis, and descended upon the senses like a pall.

"Rum sort of place," remarked Jack, with a shake as though to rid himself of the strange influence of the spot. "Just look at those trees with their naked knotted trunks, and roots that seem to writhe and crawl like snakes!"

Ted set his teeth hard to ward off the foolish, shuddery kind of feeling that came over him.

"What humbug you talk! Judging by the shape and size and general appearance I should say this was originally the fish-pond belonging to the Priory. Nearly every place of the sort had its own private resources on which to draw for the regulation fish diet that was an article of religion in those days."

Half in bravado, half for the sake of the reassurance to be gained by the sound of his own voice, Jack lifted his to the tune of "To-morrow will be Friday," when as a mere matter of fact it would be Saturday. From a musical point of view, the effect was not good. The voice sounded harsh and unnatural, and seemed to rouse queer murmurs and complainings among the trees, as though the leaves were trying to whisper their secrets in the dull ears of the two mortals who had intruded on their dusky solitude.

"Stop that awful croaking," his friend hissed in his ear as he made a half-hearted and wholly out of tune attack upon the chorus. "Shut up, can't you! There's some one watching us over there."

The singer came to a sudden stop, the last note strangled in his throat.

"Where? Who?" he asked.

"Over yonder," indicating a point between the trees, a little to the left.

The branch of a tree knocked Ted's hat off at this moment. As he rose from groping after it his companion touched him on the arm.

"It's so beastly dark among these trees one can't be sure of anything," he grumbled in an undertone, "but I certainly did think I caught the flutter of a gown or something on ahead. Thank goodness we're coming to open ground at last. There! What did I tell you?"

He pointed to a comparatively clear space that lay between them and the Priory, and over which a dark, swiftly-moving figure could be distinguished passing.

"I should just like to know how she came here!" he added.

"She?" repeated the other vaguely.

"Why, you said so yourself in the first place, didn't you? Besides, look at the gown, and the hood drawn over the head. What else can it be but a woman?"

"Monks wore gowns," said Ted slowly and abstractedly, "and sometimes pulled their cowls over their heads."

"Why—what in the name——" began Jack, when he felt himself gripped suddenly by the arm.

"See, it has disappeared by the door leading into the cloisters! Let us follow, and try and find out what it means."

Borne along by the influence of the stronger will, the other allowed himself to be led in a direction totally opposed to the one in which his own inclinations pointed. To all appearances the cloisters were deserted, and the silence unbroken, save by their own footsteps, which sounded hollow in their ears. They had traversed nearly two sides of the quadrangle, when something glided out from behind a column a few paces distant. There was the straight black gown with the hood concealing the face, together with hanging sleeves that hid the hands. A slight rattling noise accompanied it.

The two men clutched each other and waited. At first it seemed to be approaching them, then, turning sharply off at right angles, it crossed the cloister and was lost —swallowed up. Was there a secret door? Had the wall opened to receive it? Had their eyes deceived them all along? Whatever might be the explanation, neither was in the mood for further investigations.

"Come!" one breathed in the other's ear; and without any exhibition of indecent haste, but still holding on to each other as though there was satisfaction in the actual contact of flesh and blood with flesh and blood, they left the ruin.

Not until they reached the breach in the wall did another word fall from the lips of either. Then:

"We both saw it?" said Jack questioningly.

An indefinite sound intended to signify assent answered him.

"And we were both sober, and wide awake, and in the full possession of our faculties?"

But Ted had commenced to scale the wall, and was, besides, unprepared with any answer to the enigma.

"I've always looked upon such tales as unmitigated rot," Jack continued; "but I can't help admitting that there is something very unaccountable in—— Great Scott!"

A sudden dislodgement of bricks, a rattle and a crash, and his friend was precipitated at his feet with an unexpectedness that might well account for the expletive.

"Just what I said. Bet you anything you like you've done for yourself as far as your clothes are concerned."

The other made an attempt to rise, but fell back with a sharp exclamation.

"I don't know how my garments may have fared, but I'm pretty certain I've sprained my ankle."

A nice state of affairs, truly! Here was a high, albeit a half-ruined wall, and here was a disabled man on the wrong side of the same. Moreover, it was getting late, and darker every moment. With the aid of his friend, Ted made another attempt to surmount the difficulty; but the result was as futile as it was painful.

"What on earth's to be done?" asked Jack in despairing perplexity.

"There is only one thing. You must hunt up the old woman, and bribe her to come and let me out."

"But I don't know where she lives."

"Find out. I expect the first person you meet will be able to tell you."

"Well, I suppose there's no other way. I say, though"—his mind, which had been temporarily diverted by the accident, returning to the subject of their recent mysterious experience—"I don't half like leaving you here under the circumstances; and I may be gone some time."

"Blow the circumstances," from the sufferer. "My ankle's beginning to hurt so confoundedly I don't care a rap for anything else."

So Jack departed by way of the wall, which he climbed with an infinite regard for the integrity of his own valuable limbs.

Before leaving he assisted his friend to hobble a little distance and put himself into a more comfortable position, with his back against the trunk of the nearest tree.

"I needn't tell you not to move," were his last words.

As predicted, he found no difficulty in discovering the domicile of the old caretaker. She rejoiced in the name of Martha Beadle, and occupied one of a row of little tumbledown cottages just off the main street. In fact, ten minutes would have been sufficient to have brought her to the rescue had she been at home. Unfortunately it appeared, on the testimony of a neighbour, that she had just "stepped out." No reliable evidence being forthcoming as to the precise direction in which she had stepped, there was nothing for it but to hang about until she should think good to step back.

The minutes fretted away, the quarters chimed from the church clock, and still she tarried. The situation was getting desperate when it occurred to the weary waiter that though Mrs. Beadle herself was not at home, the keys might be. She would hardly be likely to carry that heavy, cumbersome bunch about with her.

Coolly unlatching the door, he entered. All was in darkness, but the introduction of

a wax match upon the scene showed the keys hanging on a nail close at hand. He unhooked them, and at once "made tracks" for the Priory.

There was a little delay caused by his having to try all the keys to find the right one. Then there was some difficulty in getting it to act. Either his hand shook, or the key, recognising an unfamiliar grasp, refused to respond. But at last it gave way.

It was very dark inside, but he succeeded in making out the tree beneath which he had left his friend.

"Ted," he cried, as he approached, "here I am at last. I've been no end of a time, and I expect you thought I was never coming, but—— I say, where are you? Why don't you answer?"

He quickened his steps almost to a run.

"Ted!" he shouted again. Still no reply. A sudden chill fell upon him. Putting out his hand, he touched the tree. There was no one there!

To return to the other.

After his companion left him the pain in his ankle, at first acute, gradually lessened.

"Perhaps I haven't sprained it so badly after all," he thought. "What a nuisance it is, anyhow! Well, it's no use crying over spilt milk, and as Jack may have some trouble in hunting up the old woman, I may as well make myself as comfortable as I can in the meanwhile."

He leant his head against the gnarled old trunk, and closed his eyes. The darkness and mysterious quietude of the spot must have lulled him to rest. At any rate, at the end of an indefinite interval he started up bewildered.

"Where am I? What's up? Who's that?"

Some one had just passed close by him—a black, dimly-outlined figure, whose movements were, as before, accompanied by a faint rattling sound, like that which might be made by a rosary as it swung to and fro. The sound, slight though it was, recalled everything.

"The monk again," he whispered. "But for my ankle I'd follow and see——"

A sudden recklessness seized him.

"It hardly hurts at all now. I'll try if I can stand."

Slowly and cautiously he raised himself upon his feet, and steadying himself against the tree, tried to pierce the gloom, but could discern nothing. Stay—what was that? Could it be?—yes, there was a light in the ruins, flickering and uncertain, but a light all the same.

"I'll find out what it means if I die for it," was his rash resolve.

So with the aid of his stick he crept across the thick turf, hardly conscious of pain or weakness in the half fearful, wholly absorbing interest that lured him on. What was that sound, too, monotonous and regular, like a pick or some sharp instrument striking upon stone?

They were at work in the cloisters, at work by the light of torches, which threw their lurid, wayward gleams upon a group of dark monastic forms. They were hewing out a chamber in the wall, a chamber in which a man might barely stand upright.

Blood-red reflections were thrown on mouldering arch and crumbling column, and made crimson splashes on the worn stone pavement.

An owl hooted among the ruins; instantly the work ceased.

"Is it a dream?" the watcher asked himself, as he lurked in the shadow of a doorway.

The owl hooted again, and from out the gloomiest recesses of the cloisters another group appeared; a group composed of two figures leading—dragging—a third, this third being the only one of all the weird assembly that had the face exposed. Such an awful, ghastly face, with the eyes of one doomed, soul and body!

Arrived at the entrance of the living tomb, the victim gave one wild, agonised look round—a look which burnt itself into the memory of the witness.

The owl hooted for the third time, the torches flared redly for an instant, then flickered low and died in darkness, and there was only the moon shining down upon the desolate, deserted cloisters. The sound of a fall was followed by silence, deep and unbroken.

"It was a lucky thing I thought of the cloisters," remarked Jack next day, "and it was equally lucky I happened to have a drop of brandy in my travelling-flask. As it was, it gave me no end of a shock when I tumbled over you in the dark. And you haven't done your ankle any good either. Doctor says you may think yourself lucky if you're able to stand on it by the end of next week. A nice sort of finish to our walking tour! As to that little tableau vivant you declare you were eye-witness of, I can't quite swallow that. I fancy the pain in your ankle must have affected your head, and

the scene, and the hour, and the associations, and all the stories you'd heard about the place, jumbled themselves up together in your brain and produced the highly sensational result you describe. Anyhow, I should think, one way and another, you've had about enough of the Priory."

"You might a' knocked me down with a feather when I come back and found them keys gone."

The speaker was Mrs. Beadle, the period a week later, and the scene the ruined cloisters.

"I declare, if I didn't think as it must be the Black Prior 'isself as 'ad walked 'em off. You've 'eared on 'im? No? Well, fack is it ain't gen'rally spoke of for fear o' givin' the place a bad name, though it's all right so long as yer don't get pokin' round arter dark and sprainin' yer ankle and sich like."

This was a dig at that one of her audience whose mode of progression was aided and abetted by a couple of sticks.

"'Owsomever, that's neither 'ere nor there. But about this 'ere Prior. 'Undreds o' years ago he lived and died, and d'yer think he can lie quiet? Not if he knows it, pertickler of a Friday."

"And why Friday more than any other day?"

"Well, yer see he was a reg'lar bad 'un, and there was another monk as he had a spite agen. So what's he do but comes be'ind 'im as he were a-settin' there by the pond over yonder a-catchin' fish for 'is Friday's dinner, and, takin' 'im unawares like, tumbles 'im in 'ead over 'eels and drownds 'im."

"But the pond wasn't deep enough."

"I don't know nothink about that, that's 'ow it were told me, and if you don't like it——"

"Oh, go on, go on."

"Well, the other monks they finds it out, and what does they do? They takes 'im, meanin' the Prior, and builds 'im up alive in this very wall—as it might be 'ere," indicating a portion of the masonry.

"But have you ever seen or heard anything?"

"Times and agen I've fancied I've 'eared groans when I bin passin' 'bout dusk, and I don't doubt as he did groan powerful long at the time, and 'oller too. As to seein' anythink, maybe I 'ave and maybe I 'aven't. Any'ow, I promised to cuddle yer blood, and 'tain't my fault if I ain't bin and done it."

AN AUTUMN MANŒUVRE.

It is now nearly a year since the occurrence of the events which I am about to narrate as a warning to susceptible bachelors. May others profit by my misfortune, and take to heart the moral which he who runs may read in the following truthful record of my discomfiture!

My name is Jasper Dodderley, my residence is in the famous old cathedral town of Hilminster, and by profession I am a solicitor. I was always remarkable for my gallantry and devotion to the fair sex; but I distributed my homage amongst them with the strictest impartiality. The truth is, I loved them all as a body too much to forfeit my bachelor's privilege of flirting at large, or, in other words, I was too much of a ladies' man ever willingly to become a lady's man.

In this way, always skirmishing, but never allowing myself to be drawn into a regular engagement, when my thirty-fifth birthday arrived it found me still a free man. I forgot the proverb about pitchers which go too often to the well, and certainly never for a moment imagined that the days of my celibacy were already numbered. Yet such was indeed the case, though no foreboding of what was in store for me disturbed my mind when, in the August of that year, I started for Codlington, the well-known East Coast watering-place, where I had decided to spend my autumn holidays.

Now, Codlington, although it is a fashionable resort, is not a remarkably lively town. It is not good for man to be alone—especially at a watering-place; without a flirtation, life at the seaside is like a salad without dressing. Luckily, at a watering-place, those who wish to flirt seldom experience much difficulty in gratifying their taste, and I quickly discovered the companion I sought in the person of a dashing Irish widow who was staying in the same hotel, and sat next to me at table d'hôte. Her name was Mrs. Daly, and though she was no longer in her first youth, she was emphatically what *is* termed "a fine woman"—tall, stout, and handsome. Then, she dressed well, her conversation was amusing, and she spoke with a slight touch of the brogue which I found singularly fascinating; so that from the first I was attracted by her, and blessed the chance which had made me her neighbour. Naturally I took full advantage of

my position, and we were soon on excellent terms, which became really cordial when, in the course of our conversation, I discovered that she had friends in Hilminster, and that I was not unknown to her by repute.

From that moment we no longer felt like strangers, and I was delighted to hear that she, like myself, intended to stay at Codlington until the end of September. It was long since I had met any one who had made such a favourable first impression on me, and when dinner came to an end and we separated, I, for one, was resolved to cultivate the acquaintance assiduously during the next six weeks.

Let me condense into a paragraph the events of the next month, which was remarkable for nothing but the rapid progress of our intimacy. From the first we were constantly thrown together, meeting frequently on the promenade or in the hotel grounds, and regularly every night at dinner, for although, as other guests left, we gravitated steadily to the top of the table, we moved up together and remained neighbours. Thus a week passed away, and then, one evening, Mrs. Daly invited me to take my coffee in her sitting-room, where we spent a pleasant hour by the open window, while her companion — a prim, withered little spinster, whom Mrs. Daly called her "sheep-dog," but who, by the side of her large patroness, resembled nothing so much as a toy terrier—sat silent in the background, working nameless monstrosities in wools. A few evenings later the invitation was repeated, and before long I got into a regular habit of "dropping in" after dinner for a little conversation and music.

By this time, of course, our friendship was established on a most familiar footing, and our flirtation was approaching the borders of a more tender feeling. For once my prudence had deserted me, and I was rapidly drifting into a serious entanglement, when I suddenly awakened to a sense of my situation. Well do I remember the moment of the discovery! I was singing our favourite piece—a tender little love-song, composed by me in a moment of inspiration after a shilling sail, and set to music of her own by Mrs. Daly —and I was rendering the first verse with even more than my usual feeling:

> The bounding main I do not love,
> It bounds too much for me;
> Nor do I like the free blue waves,
> I find them far too free;
> Yet o'er the ocean would I fly
> To thee, my love, to thee.

As I finished our eyes met, and in hers I seemed to read the question, "Would you?" Like a revelation it burst upon me that that was just the question I should have asked myself long ago. Would I? Was I prepared to embark upon the stormy sea of matrimony for the sake of Mrs. Daly? If not, had I the courage to cut short my stay at Codlington and part abruptly from her, possibly never to meet her again? For that was the only alternative. At the point I had reached, to stand still was impossible. I must either go on or go back.

My choice was soon made. I liked Mrs. Daly much, but I loved liberty more. Therefore I decided to retire from Codlington while yet there was time. I would pretend that business required my presence at home, sacrifice the last fortnight of my holiday, bid her a cordial farewell—and do my best to forget that I had ever met her. But it behoved me to act with promptitude; in my situation every day had its dangers. I resolved to quit Codlington on the following Monday, and throughout the three intervening days—it was then a Thursday —to observe all circumspection and to see as little of her as was possible, while taking care not to excite her suspicions by any marked avoidance of her.

Unfortunately it is difficult to avoid people in a town like Codlington, where the road to everywhere lies along "the front," and almost the first person I met, as I was strolling down the promenade the following afternoon, was Mrs. Daly. Of course I had to stop to speak to her; but after a few minutes I remembered my prudent resolutions and prepared to pass on, pleading the first excuse that came to hand.

"It is such a beautiful afternoon," I said, "that I am going for an hour's row."

"Really!" she cried. "Can you row, then, Mr. Dodderley?"

"Oh, yes!" I answered, not caring to confess that all my boating had been done on the sluggish waters of the Hilminster Canal, and that it was years since I had had an oar in my hand.

"How strange you never told me before!" she gushed. "Why, there's nothing I like better, and yet I haven't been out once this year."

What could I do but place myself at her disposal then and there? And as she consented after some slight hesitation, we soon found ourselves stepping into a corpulent tub, almost as broad as she was long, which the boat-hirer, after glancing

critically at my companion's proportions, declared was "just the thing to suit us."

At first we got on better than I had anticipated. A strong breeze was blowing off shore, and the tide was running out, so that, in spite of the clumsy oars and my somewhat erratic style, we made fairly rapid progress, and I quickly gained the confidence in my own powers which, I must admit, had been lacking at the beginning. So I pulled gaily on until the shore was almost lost to view, listening with a complacent smile to Mrs. Daly's compliments on my dexterity.

"I'm sorry I didn't know you cared for this kind of thing," I remarked at last. "If you had only told me I'd have placed my humble abilities at your command long ago. As it is," I continued, with a sigh, "this first pleasant excursion must, I fear, also be our last."

"Do you think the fine weather is going to break up, then?' she enquired.

"No, not that," I replied sadly, "but I regret to say our pleasant party must break up soon. Most important business calls me back to Hilminster, and I must tear myself away from here by next Monday at the latest."

Mrs. Daly looked thoughtful, but she only answered:

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes," I went on, tugging savagely at the oars to signify my annoyance; "it's a terrible nuisance, but it can't be helped. Business must be attended to. I can't tell you how much I am upset——"

Even as the words left my lips, Fate played a most unkind jest upon me and upset me literally, my right oar unaccountably missing the water and flying out of my hand, while I tumbled heels over head into the bows. For nearly thirty seconds I lay there half-dazed, then I picked myself up slowly and laughed a foolish laugh.

"That's what we boating men call catching a crab, Mrs. Daly," I explained, trying to look as if I had done it on purpose, and felt pleased to see how well I had succeeded. "I thought perhaps it might amuse you to see how it's done."

"It was good of you to take the trouble," she answered drily, "but don't you think it's time to turn back?"

Alas! that was more easily said than done. My right oar was already out of reach, and though I made heroic efforts with the only one left me, we drifted farther and farther away from it. And then I awoke to the seriousness of our situation. With only one oar, I, who knew nothing about sculling, was called upon to propel a heavy tub—to say nothing of the heavy lady in it—against wind and tide for several miles! Which was absurd, as Euclid has it. But Mrs. Daly was too much alarmed to listen to reason. With bitter reproaches and tears, she insisted on my labouring to extricate her from the position in which I had placed her by my clumsiness—such was her harsh expression—and, changing seats with me, watched me like an Egyptian taskmistress while I plied my ineffectual scull at the stern. Pitilessly she eyed me, and whenever she detected the slightest sign of flagging, urged me to renewed exertions until night fell, and, far, far away, the lights of Codlington shone out. By that time, despite my strenuous exertions, we had been carried far out to sea, and at last even Mrs. Daly acknowledged that I was taxing myself in vain, and allowed me to rest from my bootless toil. But I only exchanged one form of exertion for another. For the rest of the night I had to act as a kind of animated fog-horn, yelling my loudest at intervals of two minutes, and occasionally lighting wax vestas which were promptly blown out by the wind, and in no case could have been seen by a boat more than two or three yards away. But in this line also I was doomed to be a failure, for I had shouted myself hoarse, and Mrs. Daly was beginning to show symptoms of hysterics, when suddenly the welcome sound of an answering hail floated over the water towards us, and immediately afterwards the dark outline of a fishing-smack loomed up close by. A few words sufficed to explain our predicament, and then a hoarse voice—but oh, how sweet to us!—bellowed the order, "Throw us yer painter," complying with which request we soon found ourselves towed rapidly through the water towards Codlington, where, however, as the wind was against the smack, we did not arrive until nearly two hours later; so that it was almost morning when we knocked up the night porter of our hotel, and separated to seek the food and rest we were so much in need of.

I remained in bed all the next day, contenting myself with sending a message to ask how Mrs. Daly felt after the exposure; she also remained in bed all the next day, contenting herself with replying to my message that she was as well as could be expected. On the following morning, feeling much better, I rose about midday,

and having breakfasted, proceeded to Mrs. Daly's sitting-room to make my enquiries in person, a waiter whom I had sent up to ask the question having brought me the intimation that she would be graciously pleased to receive me. Not without trepidation did I knock at her door, and the moment I entered the room I perceived that either she had not yet forgiven me for our recent misadventure, or that something else had seriously upset her.

"Oh, Mr. Dodderley! she cried distractedly, paying no heed to my morning greeting, "you don't mean to say you haven't gone yet?"

"Gone!" I repeated in some surprise. "Of course not. Monday was the day I named, and this is only Sunday."

"I know, I know. But I hoped—oh, I did hope—that something might have made a still earlier departure necessary."

This was far from flattering, and I felt annoyed. Although I had deemed it prudent to part from her, I had expected—I may say, hoped—to be regretted. According to my calculations she ought to have been grieved to hear that circumstances had obliged me to curtail my holiday, yet here she was actually hinting that I had not gone soon enough!

"Madam," I said stiffly, "I regret if my presence, by reminding you of our late experience, offends you in any way. But since you seem to wish it, I can start this afternoon——"

"No, no, you misunderstand me sadly. It is not that. I merely thought that if something had happened to call you away last night or early this morning, it might have been better for you and have saved much—much unpleasantness."

"Better for me! how?" I asked uneasily. "Unpleasantness! of what description?"

"The truth is, Mr. Dodderley," she began, blushing and looking down, "my brother arrived here unexpectedly last night, and somebody has given him a garbled—a scandalously garbled—account of our adventure on Friday night. He has worked himself into a terrible passion about it, and when he is roused, he is really terrible."

I tried to look as if, when I was roused, I could be really terrible too, but only, I fear, with indifferent success.

"The worst of it is," she went on, "once he gets an idea into his head, it is absolutely impossible to get it out again. We might talk for hours, but we'd never persuade him that the version he has heard is a false and malicious libel."

"But surely, madam," I asked, beginning to feel uncomfortable, "surely your brother will listen to reason?"

"You forget," she answered sadly. "My brother is an Irishman."

"Still," I persisted, though forced to admit that there was something in the objection, "I am a lawyer, as you know, and if I put the case plainly, tersely, and logically before Mr.—Mr.——"

"McCracken," she said; "Bangor McCracken"

"Bangor McCracken!" I repeated, with a shiver. A name more suggestive of pistols for two I had never heard.

"Of Ballykilbash," she added.

Worse and worse. The dreadful combination quite took my breath away. I paused and wiped my brow.

"No, no! you must not meet," said Mrs. Daly decidedly; "the consequences might be dreadful. If a duel resulted I'd never forgive myself. Twice already, I know, he has fought in France and once he killed his man."

"That may be," I replied hastily, "but in this happy England of ours a duel is an impossibility."

"That means you would not meet him?" she enquired gladly. "Promise me—oh, promise me—that you will not allow him to draw you into a personal encounter."

I gave her my promise with the greatest alacrity. She looked relieved.

"Thank you," she said; "you embolden me to make another request. Pray go from here at once—this very day. You are both high-spirited men, and I shudder to think of what may happen if you come to words."

So did I!

"As for your brother, he is safe from me," I replied magnanimously. "For your sake I give up my fervent wish to meet this man and have an explanation with him; for your sake I promise to leave this hotel without a moment's avoidable delay. Set your mind quite at rest on his account. I'll not lay a finger on him."

For a moment her face brightened; but it quickly clouded over again.

"It's of no use," she sighed. "I was forgetting. He copied your address from the hotel visitors' book, and he'll follow you. Oh, you do not know how determined he is! On one occasion he followed a man who he fancied had insulted him, half over the country, and when he caught him, horsewhipped him within an inch of his life. He left the man for dead."

The idea of flying all over England

pursued by a wild Irishman with a horse-whip was certainly far from agreeable, but still I strove to retain my self-possession.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "if—for your sake, of course, entirely for your sake—I went abroad for a few weeks——"

"It would be useless. He'd wait till you came back. He never forgets and never forgives."

"Let him follow me to Hilminster if he likes, then," I burst out angrily. "If he touches me he'll find he's caught a Tartar."

"What would you do?" cried Mrs. Daly.

"Do! Have him bound over to keep the peace," I returned recklessly.

"You might do that, of course. But then—think of the scandal that might ensue."

The scandal! To be sure; that had to be considered. No doubt the scoundrel McCracken would have the impudence to set up a defence of justification, and I could see that our unfortunate accident, innocent as it was, might give a grand opportunity to unscrupulous counsel. I had spent most of my life in seeking the bubble reputation even from the canons' mouths, and rather than forfeit what I had gained I would almost have been ready to endure my horsewhipping in silence. Yet if I allowed myself to be publicly horsewhipped with impunity, my position would not be much better. My kind friends would go about shaking their heads mysteriously, and whispering that they always had said it would happen to me some day, that without doubt I had good reasons for my leniency, and that they had it on the best authority that, if the case had been brought into court, a terrible scandal must have come to light. In short, by the end of a week or two my character would be in shreds, and my character was the larger portion of my stock-in-trade. My resolution was instantly taken.

"You are right, Mrs. Daly," I said, after a pause. "For your sake again, there must be no scandal."

"Yet I don't see how it's to be avoided," she answered dolefully. "When a man like my brother Bangor mixes himself up in anything, there's almost bound to be a scandal. No, I can see no way out of it."

I myself could only see the one: to propose to Mrs. Daly. After all, I liked her very much, she seemed to be well-to-do—and there was just a chance she might refuse me. In any case, my respectability was even dearer to me than my liberty.

"Then for the future," I cried, taking the plunge at once, "let him have no ground for interfering with your affairs. Give that dear charge to me! Recent occurrences have only precipitated a declaration you must long have seen trembling on my lips. Nora! is it possible—may I dare to hope—that you will consent to share my lot, and thereby make me the happiest of men?"

"Oh, Jasper!" she whispered. "This is so unexpected! But if you really wish it—why—yes!"

She was mine!

After that, as I had anticipated, we had no more trouble with Bangor McCracken; indeed, he was so entirely satisfied that he took himself off from Codlington that very night without so much as seeing me; and even at our wedding, which took place a couple of months later, he failed to put in an appearance.

WANTED, A SKIPPER.

"ANY more skippers?" asked a deep voice from the private room of a shipping office in Fenchurch Avenue.

"I think that one was the last, sir," replied a clerk, looking over the ground-glass screen.

Half-a-dozen seafaring men, bronzed and bluff, had already passed in, and had come out looking more or less scornful and dissatisfied. But there was a young man, fair-haired and fresh-looking, still sitting in a corner, who sprang forward and handed in a card—it bore the name of George Ernest Seymour—saying:

"Take my name in to the governor. I'm a skipper too."

The "governor" looked somewhat superciliously at the young man as he entered.

"Not much experience, I should think!" taking the young man's papers and certificates, and glancing carelessly over them.

"No," replied Seymour firmly; "yours will be my first command and perhaps my last, if, as I gather, it proves 'a risky job.'"

The shipping man looked at the other keenly.

There was plenty of dash and courage about the youth, evidently; and he went through his papers more attentively, and finally nodded his head, and turned to explain for what purpose the skipper was wanted.

The "Parahyba," a fine ocean steamer, Clyde-built, and over four thousand tons register, handsomely fitted for passenger

traffic, was now lying in the harbour of Rio. She was originally intended for a "national" line of steamers between Rio and Havre, an enterprise that had been stopped by the breaking out of the revolution, and there was danger that the ship, which was then under the Brazilian flag, would be seized by one or other of the contending parties. Her owners, Segrado and Company, of Rio, had accordingly sold her at a nominal price to an English firm, and an English skipper was required to go out to her, hoist the British flag and bring her home, whatever the Dons might have to say about it, armed forts on one side, ironclad war-ships on the other.

So much for the risk; and now for the reward, which was on the "no cure no pay" principle: a thousand pounds if the skipper brought the ship safely into an English port, and the command of her subsequently. A free passage out would be provided, and a credit with Segrado and Company for the expenses of shipping a crew out there.

Seymour pondered for a few minutes. No one was dependent on him; he was in no immediate want of money; he was sick of acting as first officer, with all the work and scanty pay; his seniors were wiry, seasoned men likely to last well into the next century. He signified his assent to the terms; articles were prepared and signed, and within four-and-twenty hours he was on board a steamer bound for the South American ports, with a Channel gale whistling in his ears as he hummed the old sailors' shanty:

> To Rio Grande we're bound, away to Rio;
> Then fare you well, my pretty young girls,
> We're bound to the Rio Grande.

The voyage was uneventful, and in due time was made out the bluff peak of the Sugarloaf mountain, that guards the entrance to the harbour. But here it was evident there was something serious going on. The roar of guns, the screeching of huge shells, could be heard for a long distance in the soft balmy air, and as they approached the harbour mouth, rolling clouds of white sulphurous smoke veiled the scene within. The captain of the steamer decided that he could not risk entering the port, and to sheer away for Monte Video. But he hailed a fishing-boat, manned by one swarthy Brazilian, who was quietly laying out his lines regardless of all the din; and Pedro the fisherman agreed to put the English señor ashore for a smart consideration. And in addition Pedro bargained for a dollar for every shot that missed the boat, adding, with a grin, that he would himself pay the señor five times over for any shot that struck.

Still Pedro took no unfair advantage of his bargain, hanging off and on till night came on, and the firing almost ceased. Then they crept in with the tide unnoticed from the shore. All the lights and the buoys that formerly marked the channels had been removed, and lines of torpedoes substituted; but Pedro could have found his way in or out blindfolded, and his boat glided on in safety. Once, indeed, a gun flashed out at them from a fort, and a shell went screaming past, ricocheting and driving up great columns of glittering spray, and then Pedro slapped his pocket ecstatically, for they were soon out of range. Then a white search-light suddenly gleamed upon them, and they were challenged peremptorily from a great war-ship, surrounded by torpedo nettings, where they could hear the click of a machine gun being brought to bear upon them. But Pedro's response of "Poor fishermen" was sufficient. He and his boat were well known, and allowed to pass.

"And where does the señor wish to land?" asked Pedro, leaning on his oars, all the dangers of the passage being over.

"On board the 'Parahyba,'" cried Seymour. He longed to find himself in the captain's cabin of his own ship.

"But, señor, no," cried Pedro, crossing himself devoutly. "Not for a boatload of rials would I venture near that ship at night. And, señor capitano, she lies five miles away at the other side of the harbour. No, it is impossible," and he sank forward as if utterly exhausted.

As nothing would induce Pedro to make the passage, Seymour bade him row to the nearest quay.

"In the morning," said Pedro apologetically, as he moored his boat. "But to-night, oh no! Do you know, señor, that the 'Parahyba' is haunted?"

"Nonsense, Pedro!" said Seymour, jealous of the character of his new ship. "And you a brave man! I am ashamed of you!"

"But, señor," cried Pedro, laying a bronzed finger on the other's jacket, "I have seen with mine own eyes. Not long ago in the moonlight I was fishing over there, and crossed the stern of the 'Parahyba,' and knowing the stevedore in charge of her, and who sometimes had bought fish from me; what do I see?

Thrust through the porthole in her side was a hideous face glowing with fire like a demon's. 'I am in torments, tell my wife!' and he disappeared."

"And what about the stevedore?" asked Seymour, with a good deal of interest.

"He has been seen no more. No one will go on board, but cries and groans have been heard. And consulting the good fathers we hear of a Spanish sea captain drowned over there, fifty years ago, impenitent and unconfessed. Doubtless he is in purgatory. Perhaps the señor capitano will pay for masses for the soul of a brother seaman?"

"Not I," said Seymour hastily, and perhaps unfeelingly. "He may get out as he got in!"

Yet he was vexed at the story, which might hinder his getting a crew together.

Although the quays seemed desolate and deserted, there was life enough in the city, and things went on much as usual in spite of the civil war. Seymour was comfortably lodged at an hotel, and sallying out next morning he was delighted with the city, which was on a small scale a tropical Paris, with gay shops and lively streets, where people lounged under awnings, and sat outside the cafés, taking little heed of the distant reverberations of the great guns. Tram-cars drawn by lively mules went jingling along. Negro porters laughing and singing threaded their way through the crowd. Stalls of luscious fruit were at the disposal of the passers-by.

"Don't be too eager, my young friend," said a voice at Seymour's elbow. "Remember Yellow Jack!"

The young skipper turned with a basket of fruit in his hand. Well he knew that name of evil import. Comrades had told him of the dreaded Yellow Jack, that mows down men and women as the reaper mows down corn-stalks. But he had thought it a thing of the past.

Still, it was hanging about the place, said the good-natured Englishman who had accosted him, and some said it had been very bad among the troops and on the ships in the harbour. Oh, yes, he could direct the captain to the house of Segrado and Company. For it was Seymour's first business to verify his credit with that respectable firm.

A beautiful place appeared the house of Segrado when one passed out of the hot street into its cool courtyard, where grew a mass of palms and tropical plants, orchids hanging in glorious clusters, and columns and verandahs wreathed with luxuriant creepers. The counting-house was under the great porte cochère. Its only occupant at this moment was a dark, sinister-looking man in a straw hat and light suit, who sat in a basket-chair, smoking a huge cigar. He pointed with the lighted end of his weed to an inner door. Seymour went in. There at a table writing sat a young and very lovely woman, an expression of intense perplexity on her beautiful face. So engrossed she was in her occupation that Seymour continued to gaze upon her unobserved, unwilling to cut short the pleasing vision, till, throwing down her pen, she buried her face in her hands with an exclamation of despair.

"Madam," cried Seymour, advancing a step.

She looked up, startled, an indignant flash in her eyes lighting up their gloom.

"Your business, sir?" she cried peremptorily.

Seymour placed in her hands the papers with which he was charged. The señora looked over them in some embarrassment.

"So," she said at last, fixing her dark eyes softly upon him, "you are the Capitano George Seymour, whom I expected." But she added in a disappointed tone: "You are very young!"

George was a little nettled at this, and replied brusquely:

"Well, madam, and you are not very old."

A witching gleam of mirth passed over Donna Segrado's face, replaced next moment by a wistful expression.

"Alas, yes; I am young and inexperienced. My husband is no longer young, and boasts of much experience; but he is away. I know not what to do. Would you be so kind, señor capitano, as to sit down here and tell me what all these papers mean?"

Seymour sat down beside her half tremblingly. Their hands met as they turned over the leaves of the papers. He felt her breath on his cheek as she leaned forward to listen eagerly to his explanations.

"Now," she said, when he had finished, "tell me what to sign, and I will do it. But I can sign perfectly, and often do for my husband. See!"

And in and with a beautiful hand she wrote "Segrado et Compagnie" at the foot of a bill of exchange.

"But, madam," expostulated the skipper, "you should not sign things on the advice of a stranger. Let me call in your head clerk, and he will tell you what to sign."

"Oh, no! no!" cried the señora, putting her hand on his arm. "I do not trust him. He is perfidious. They are all perfidious! Hush!"

They both were silent, and Seymour heard a low, regular murmur from an inner closet.

"She still sleeps," cried the señora. "It is my duenna. She watches me continually. Let us speak low. I wonder if I can trust you?"

"With life or anything else," cried Seymour devotedly.

"It is life, perhaps," said the señora softly. "Listen! My husband is away, I know not where. A month ago he left me—for a few days. I have seen nothing, heard nothing of him. Oh, capitano! you have not met him, you have not seen him in England?"

The capitano shook his head. Sincerely as the question was asked, he could hardly repress a smile.

"But they do not know," continued the señora rapidly. "They think he has returned. If they were not afraid of him they would seize everything for the Government. At times they see a man moving about in my apartments. They think it is my husband. Shall I tell you who it is?" she asked, with a quick, vivid blush.

"If you please, madam," said Seymour rather stiffly.

"It is my darling brother Francisco. He is a naval officer; he is in the insurgent fleet. If they found him he would be shot. Conceive it! Just eighteen and as beautiful as an angel, and they would shoot him! And he comes at night, comes to comfort his poor sister! Listen!" cried the señora, in the very lowest of voices. "He is here now!"

"The deuce he is!" said Seymour. For he well knew the fate that awaited any captured insurgents.

"Yes," cried the señora, in low, vibrant tones. "The cause is lost! The word has gone forth, 'Sauve qui peut.' The poor boy has found refuge with me, but for how long? My God, my God, they will take him, they will kill him!"

"By Heaven," cried Seymour, cut to the heart at her distress, "he shall not die. I will save him."

"Did you call, señora?" said a strident voice, and the sinister figure of the head clerk appeared in the doorway.

"Yes," cried Seymour, taking the word from the lady, who was speechless. "Take this bill"—it was the bill the señora had signed—"go to the bank, get me cash for it—gold—and bring it here at once. Do you hear? Quick!"

The man sniffed at the bill suspiciously, and seemed half-inclined to dispute the order.

"Yes, go!" cried Donna Segrado. "Your master will be angry if it is not done at once."

And when the clerk had retired she seized the capitano's hand and kissed it.

"You will be our saviour!" she cried. "Yes, our saviour indeed!"

Never was a crew more quickly got together than the crew of the "Parahyba" that day. Seymour's energy carried all obstacles before it. The British Consul helped nobly, and some English skippers who were waiting for orders lent a hand. And before the day was over two boatloads of seamen had been shipped on board, the British flag was run up, and the blue Peter, fires were lighted; the inanimate ship began to breathe out smoke and steam, rigging and ropes were stretched and tautened, compasses were adjusted, and when the captain came aboard, the crew, as they mustered, gave him three ringing cheers.

But the naval authorities shook their heads. There were learned doubts as to whether the boat had legally acquired her rights as a British ship.

"You go out at your own risk, Captain Seymour," they said; which was pretty evident, for if he were sent to the bottom, no power could drag him up again.

And the skipper awaited the approach of night in much secret excitement. At dusk he went ashore in his own gig, picking out as smart a crew as he could, and he walked calmly up to Segrado's; for he had given out that Don Segrado and his wife were coming on board to say good-bye.

The "Don" and Donna were all ready, the former muffled up in a great cloak, poor man, and a big sombrero hat, and his wife in shawl and mantilla. Each took an arm of the captain, and they marched down towards the shore. The head clerk watched them narrowly, standing in the shadow of the great porte cochère. Suddenly he clapped his hands together. "I have got it!" he cried, and started off in the direction of the nearest guard-house.

"Take it easy, Don," cried the skipper, the ship's boat now in sight; "remember the rheumatics."

The Don—for it was Don Francisco, of course, under the disguise of the old gentleman's coat and hat—laughed gaily as he handed his sister into the boat, and as the sailors tossed their oars in respect for the late owner.

But hardly had they left the quay when a shout was heard, and a mounted officer was seen dashing along and crying out, "Stop them."

"Give way, boys," cried the captain, and the men did give way with a will. The officer fired his carbine, but the bullet went wide, and in a few moments the boat was out of range.

There was now no time to be lost, for of a surety the forts would be ordered to fire on the "Parahyba" if they did not look sharp. The señora stood trembling on the gangway, for a shore boat had been hailed to take her back. She wept on her brother's neck; she gave a hand to the skipper, who stood by irresolute.

"Addio, capitano," she cried. "My blessings attend you."

She could say no more for tears.

"Oh, hang it!" cried the captain huskily. "You shan't go back to those scoundrels. Here, you lubbers, sheer off," and he threw a handful of silver among the shore boatmen, who laughed and wished him a good voyage.

"What, will you take me, too?" cried the señora, full of joy.

"Ay, ay," cried the skipper, and next moment his voice was all over the ship, as the anchor came up, the cables were stowed, and the engines went full speed ahead, and the boat stood out for the harbour mouth.

It was a risky business, running out on a dark night, all guiding lights extinguished, and the waters bristling with hidden dangers; but the skipper knew his bearings, and was unexpectedly aided by events, for soon headlands and shores were lighted up by burning buildings and ships. The insurrection had indeed collapsed, its officers were fugitives, and their ships were derelict or set on fire. But this was hardly known to the other side, and the forts thundered away in harmless salvoes while our skipper ran the gauntlet almost unnoticed and quite unharmed.

By morning they were out of sight of land, and the skipper was thoughtfully pacing the quarter-deck, while young Francisco, who took a sailor's interest in what was going on, was looking out from the bridge.

"Well, sir," said the quartermaster, touching his hat—he had just come up from below—"we've got a passenger on board we did not reckon for. No, sir, I don't mean the young luftenant. I mean 'Yellow Jack!'"

The skipper turned pale.

"How's that?" he cried sharply.

The seaman said that searching the hold, thinking there was something wrong, he discovered among the ballast the corpse of a man, and evidently of one who died of yellow fever.

"'Twas the caretaker, I expect," said the quartermaster. "I heard some of 'em got took."

But it was not the caretaker. Perhaps he got ashore to die. When the body was brought to light, Francisco, who was looking on, recognised it at once. Shrivelled and lean, the face was little altered by death. It was a mummy rather than a corpse, but it had once been Don Segrado.

The skipper read a prayer, and it was launched into the deep. And then the question was, whom will Jack take first? But he spared them all. A stiff south-westerly gale blew all infection out of the ship, and sent her staggering along on the homeward track. Homeward for the skipper, but what for the other two poor refugees?

However, the skipper soon solved the question in his straightforward manner. First, he gently broke to the señora the news of her husband's death. Then he asked tremblingly, "Don't you think Providence intended you to be my wife?"

She put her hand into his, and whispered: "Providence is very kind, my capitano!"

After all, that Don, if old and lean, was not such a bad fellow. The quartermaster, fumigating and clearing up, came upon a folded sheet of paper which proved to be in Don Segrado's handwriting:

"Foreseeing future troubles, I placed all my wealth on board this ship in silver ingots, painted like iron. Take it all, my dear wife.—SEGRADO."

Now although silver is cheap just now, a few tons of it run into money. But the señora means to stay with Seymour's people quietly in the country till her year of widowhood is expired, and then perhaps the captain and his wife will be heard of again. But what is her Christian name, after all? The skipper surely does not go on calling her señora? Well, that is not easy to guess. Her brother has some pet name for her, and with the skipper she is "my darling."

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating any of the Articles contained in this Number is reserved by the Authors.

TABLE OF EVENTS, 1893-1894.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

1.—In House of Commons, the Irish Home Rule Bill carried by majority of 34, and read for the first time in House of Lords.

At Herne Hill, G. E. Osmond and J. W. Stocks, on a tandem safety, covered 26 miles 156 yards in an hour.

2.—Bath Road Club's Hundred Miles Challenge Cup, won by S. F. Edge, in 5 hours 24 min. 57 sec.; best on record.

4.—Official announcement that General Sir Henry Norman, Governor of Queensland, had been appointed Viceroy of India, in succession to Lord Lansdowne.

6.—Mr. McCalmont's Isinglass, winner of Two Thousand Guineas and Derby, easily won the St. Leger, Ravensbury and Le Nicham coming in second and third. Seven ran.

7.—Very serious colliery riots in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. At Featherstone and another place, Riot Act read and military ordered to fire, with the result that two men were shot dead and several others wounded.

8.—Irish Home Rule Bill rejected by House of Lords by 419 votes to 41, largest division ever taken in Upper Chamber.

9.—At the Oval, A. W. Harris bicycled ten miles in 27 min. 23¼ sec.

11.—Royal Victoria Yacht Club Cup, won by Prince of Wales's "Britannia," who beat the American yacht "Navahoe" for third time in succession.

13.—The race for the Breton Reef Cup, from Needles to Cherbourg and back, about 120 miles, between "Britannia" and "Navahoe," probably the closest long-distance yacht race ever sailed, ended in the prize being awarded to the American, although the Prince's cutter had been first declared the winner by 2½ sec. The distance was accomplished in about 12 hours.

14, 15.—Rio de Janeiro bombarded by an insurgent fleet, great damage being done to the city and several persons killed.

16.—In their final contest—for the Cape May Cup—to Cherbourg and back, the "Britannia" defeated "Navahoe" by 36 min.

18.—The twenty-four hours' cycling race in Paris, won by Swiss champion Lesna, who covered 433 miles in the time.

21.—Official notification published that Sir H. Norman had withdrawn his acceptance of Viceroyalty of India.

Eleven men shot dead at Roanoke, Virginia, in an attempt to break into the gaol to lynch a negro prisoner.

Opening of Conference of Institute of Journalists in Lincoln's Inn Hall.

22.—Parliament adjourned for an Autumn Session.

Brilliant reception and ball to members of Institute of Journalists at Guildhall, over three thousand guests, including many foreign visitors, being present.

23.—Lancashire Plate won by Raeburn, the hitherto unbeaten Isinglass being second, and La Flèche third.

At Chicago, the International billiard match between John Roberts, Champion of England, and Frank Ives, Champion of America, won by Ives by 788 points.

Sculling match on the Thames between George Bubear and T. Sullivan, of New Zealand, for Championship of England, won by the Colonial oarsman in 22½ min.

26.—Sir John Gilbert, R.A., presented with freedom of City of London at Guildhall.

29.—Mr. Alderman Tyler elected Lord Mayor of London for ensuing civic year.

OCTOBER, 1893.

3.—Duke of York presented with freedom of City of Edinburgh.

Mile bicycle record established at Herne Hill by A. W. Harris, who covered the distance in 2 min. 4⅕ sec.

5.—The Duke and Duchess of York visited York, where they were most enthusiastically received, and the Duke presented with freedom of the City.

Sir Mortimer Durand and the other members of the British Mission arrived at Cabul, and cordially welcomed by the Ameer.

At New York, the commencing race for the America Cup between Lord Dunraven's yacht "Valkyrie" and the American champion yacht "Vigilant" had to be abandoned owing to want of wind.

7.—In twelve hours' cycling contest at Herne Hill, for which twenty-seven started, C. G. Wridgeway covered 240 miles 690 yards, the greatest distance yet made.

The first completed race for the America Cup, won by "Vigilant" by 6 min.

The second International billiard match, 10,000 up, between John Roberts and Frank Ives, played at New York, won by the English champion by 1,150 points.

At Kempton Park, the Duke of York Stakes won by Avington.

9.—In second completed race for America Cup, "Vigilant" again won by 10⅓ min.

11.—Lord Elgin appointed Viceroy of India.

Another race for the America Cup not concluded owing to calm weather.

At Newmarket, the race for the Cesarewitch ended in a dead heat between Red Eyes and Cypria. Seventeen ran.

13.—Arrival of a Russian fleet at Toulon, which met with a most enthusiastic welcome from the French, both afloat and ashore.

The third of the finished races between the English and American yachts resulted in

Vigilant being again successful, but by twelve seconds only, and after a splendid contest. By this victory the Cup is retained by the American holders.

17.—Death of Marshal MacMahon, aged 85.

18.—Death at St. Cloud of Charles Gounod, the renowned French composer, 75 years old.

20.—News arrived that fighting had begun between the British South African Company's forces and the Matabele, who were totally defeated, and that an advance upon their capital had been ordered.

25.—Cambridgeshire won by Polly Morgan, who beat Raeburn, Prisoner, and nineteen others.

26.—Garrick Theatre Company arrived at Balmoral, and gave a successful performance of "Diplomacy" before the Queen and a large circle.

27.—Another battle between the Chartered Company's forces and the Matabele, who were put to flight with great loss, and their capital destroyed.

NOVEMBER, 1893.

2.—Reassembly of House of Commons for an Autumn Session.

3.—Frightful disaster at the Spanish port of Santander, the greater part of the town being destroyed, and hundreds of lives lost, by the explosion of an immense quantity of dynamite on board a large steamer discharging cargo at the quay. The steamer itself was blown to pieces, all on board perishing except two.

Further severe fighting in Matabeleland, the natives being again decisively defeated.

8.—Terrible Anarchist atrocity at Barcelona, two bombs having been hurled from the upper gallery of the Liceo Theatre into the stalls, with the appalling result that twenty persons were killed, and many others seriously injured.

9.—Fifty-second birthday of Prince of Wales.

Lord Mayor's Day. At the Guildhall banquet Lord Kimberley made the political speech usual on the occasion.

10.—Liverpool Cup won by La Flèche, beating eleven others.

11.—Mr. F. H. Cowen's opera, "Signa," produced at Milan, and met with an extremely good reception.

13.—At Balmoral, the Carl Rosa Company performed "Fra Diavolo" before the Queen and Court.

15.—By a fire in the Old Bailey, immense destruction of property was occasioned, Newgate Prison being for some time in considerable danger.

Sir John Gorst elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University, Mr. Asquith, Home Secretary, being the defeated candidate.

16.—Death at Montreux of Sir Robert Morier, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

17.—End of the great coal strike, which had lasted over four months, a settlement having been arranged at a meeting between owners and colliers held in London under presidency of Lord Rosebery.

Death at Gratz of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, ex-Prince of Bulgaria, at the early age of 37 years.

18.—Death of Lord Ebury, aged 93. The deceased Peer sat in House of Commons as long as seventy-one years ago.

25.—Manchester November Handicap won by Golden Drop, nineteen others starting.

DECEMBER, 1893.

2.—The new railway connecting Port Said with Ismailia, opened by Khedive of Egypt.

6.—Prince of Wales nominated Grand Master of English Freemasons for twentieth successive year.

9.—Terrible Anarchist outrage perpetrated in French Chamber of Deputies, a bomb having been thrown down from one of the galleries and more or less severely injuring about fifty persons—members or visitors—in the House. A man named Vaillant was arrested, and admitted the deed.

18.—At West Kensington, the University Rugby football match won by Oxford after a keen contest by a try to nothing.

27.—Boxing Day. Fine mild weather prevailed throughout the last Bank Holiday of the year, all places of popular resort being well attended, as ware theatres and music-halls in the evening.

29.—Mr. Gladstone's eighty-fourth birthday.

JANUARY, 1894.

1.—Manchester Ship Canal informally opened for general traffic with much rejoicing.

13.—International hundred miles cycling match at Paris between Linton, English hundred miles champion, and Dubois, the French cyclist, won by former in 4 hours 47 min.

House of Commons adjourned to 12th February.

22.—News arrived that the absconding Jabez Balfour, ex-manager of the notorious Liberator Building Society, and ex-M.P. for Burnley, had been arrested in Argentina, at the instance of the British Vice-Consul, for extradition to this country.

25.—The long-talked-of fight between Mitchell and Corbett, for £4,000 and Championship of the World, took place at Jacksonville, U.S.A., and resulted in defeat of the English pugilist, after a short but fiercely fought battle of three rounds.

Death of Sir Gerald Portal, the young and distinguished diplomatist, who had recently returned from Uganda in Central Africa, aged 35 years.

26.—After an estrangement of over three years, Prince Bismarck visited German Emperor at Berlin, and received such a cordial and splendid reception, as fully proved the complete reconciliation between the great statesman and his sovereign.

27.—In the return hundred miles cycling match at Paris, Dubois avenged his recent defeat by winning a rather easy victory over Linton in 4 hours 40 min.

FEBRUARY, 1894.

1.—Official denial published that Mr. Gladstone contemplated early retirement from public life.

3.—Of two International Rugby football matches, that at Blackheath between England and Ireland won by the Irish by a goal and a try to a goal; while at Newport the Welsh beat Scotland by a try to nothing.

Mr. E. Burne-Jones, the distinguished painter, created a Baronet.

5.—Vaillant, the man who perpetrated the bomb outrage in Chamber of Deputies, guillotined in Paris.

12.—Reassembly of House of Commons.

Another dastardly Anarchist outrage in Paris, a bomb having been thrown on the floor of the Café Terminus, crowded with customers, with the result that one man was killed and some twenty persons badly injured. The perpetrator, Emile Henry, was arrested, but not before he had fired at and seriously wounded the gendarme by whom he was seized, who, nevertheless, clung to him until assistance arrived. For this plucky act the officer was granted the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and otherwise rewarded.

15.—News from South Africa that Lobengula, the Matabele King, was dead, and that the country was tranquil, and fighting entirely at an end.

By an explosion in the engine-room of the large German ironclad "Brandenburg," off Kiel, forty-two men were instantly killed and several others injured.

In Greenwich Park, a young Frenchman and well-known Anarchist, named Martial Bourdin, sustained such terrible injuries near the Observatory, just before dark, from the explosion of a bomb which he had about him, that death ensued within half an hour after his admission into the adjacent Seaman's Hospital.

19.—Return visit of German Emperor to Prince Bismarck at Friedrichsruhe, the Kaiser meeting with an enthusiastic reception on his arrival at the station.

21.—At Queen's Park, the annual University football match, under Association rules, won by Cambridge by 3 goals to 1.

23.—Serious British disaster in the Gambia district, West Africa, an expedition of 220 seamen, under command of Captain Gamble, of the flag-ship "Raleigh," sent to punish the slave-raiding chief, Fodi Selah, having fallen into an ambuscade on their return to their boats, and sustained a loss of three officers and ten men killed, and five officers and forty-seven men wounded, before they were able to re-embark.

24.—The new Polytechnic Institution, Battersea, which had cost £60,000, opened by Prince and Princess of Wales.

Waterloo Cup won by Count Strogonoff's bitch Texture, Mr. Fletcher's Falconer being the runner-up.

The International Rugby football match at Dublin, between Ireland and Scotland, gained by the Irish by five points to nothing.

MARCH, 1894.

2-3.—Mr. Gladstone resigned office, and Lord Rosebery appointed Prime Minister in his stead.

5.—Parliament prorogued for a week after a session of thirteen months.

10.—Fighting in West Africa brought to a successful conclusion, Fodi Selah's strongholds being destroyed, and he himself put to flight and captured in French territory.

By winning their match with Wales at Belfast, the Irish, for first time in their history, became champions of Rugby International Football for the year.

12.—New Session of Parliament opened.

13.—Departure of the Queen for Florence.

Collapse of Brazilian insurrection, the rebel ships at Rio making unconditional surrender, and their officers going on board Portuguese war-ships in the harbour.

15.—Another dynamite outrage attempted in Paris, the scene this time being the Church of the Madeleine. No damage was done, and the only person killed or injured was the would-be bomb-thrower himself, whose dead body, frightfully mangled, was found near the entrance. Like Bourdin in Greenwich Park, he had been undoubtedly "hoist with his own petard."

17.—For fifth year in succession, Oxford defeated Cambridge in the University Boat Race, winning very easily by 3½ lengths.

At Edinburgh, the Scotch beat England in the International Rugby football match.

The University Athletic Sports at West Kensington attracted a record attendance, and resulted in Oxford winning six and Cambridge three events.

20.—Death at Turin of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, aged 92 years.

25.—The upsetting of a paraffin lamp in a room at Clerkenwell caused the death of a man and his wife and three young children, an infant of fourteen days old being the only one of the unfortunate family saved.

26.—Easter Monday. Brilliant weather favoured holiday folks, all places of resort being thronged, nearly 70,000 visiting Crystal Palace alone.

27.—Lincolnshire Handicap won by Le Nicham, with Juvenal and Macready second and third. Nineteen ran.

30.—Liverpool Grand National gained by Why Not, beating Lady Ellen and twelve others.

APRIL, 1894.

7.—German Emperor arrived at Venice, and cordially received by King of Italy.

10.—Visit of King and Queen of Italy to Queen Victoria at Florence.

12.—Announcement in Parliament that a British Protectorate would be established in Uganda.

13.—German Emperor visited Emperor of Austria at Vienna.

16.—The Chancellor of Exchequer made his Budget statement, showing that the estimated revenue for 1894-5 would fall short of expenditure by four and a half millions, which he proposed to make up by largely increasing the death rates, by an additional penny on incomes over £500, by an extra sixpence a gallon on whisky, and sixpence a barrel on beer.

The Queen left Florence for Coburg to be present at the Royal wedding.

18.—The City and Suburban won by Grey Leg, Xury and Le Nicham being second and third. Eleven ran.

19.—In presence of the Queen, German Emperor, Empress Frederick, Prince of Wales, Czarewitch, and many other Royal and distinguished guests, the marriage of Grand Duke of Hesse to his cousin, Princess Victoria, second daughter of Duke of Saxe-Coburg and grand-daughter of the Queen, solemnised at Coburg with much pomp.

20.—Announcement of betrothal of Czarewitch to Princess Alix of Hesse.

Memorial to Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," in Westminster Abbey unveiled by Princess Christian.

Terrible earthquakes at Athens and throughout nearly all Greece, causing great destruction both of life and property.

German Emperor appointed Honorary Colonel of 1st Royal Dragoons by the Queen, this being the first instance of a foreign Sovereign being placed upon the roll of officers of the British Army.

27, 28.—More earthquake shocks in Greece, with additional loss of life and property.

28.—At Huddersfield, the Ten Miles Amateur Championship race again won by Mr. Sid. Thomas, in 51 min. 37 sec.

29.—Return of the Queen to Windsor.

MAY, 1894.

1.—Mansion House Fund opened in aid of sufferers by the earthquakes in Greece.

2.—New Royal Academy of Music, South Kensington, opened in state by Prince of Wales on behalf of the Queen.

Chester Cup won by Quæsitum.

4.—In a spot-barred billiard match at Manchester, John Roberts made the magnificent break of 1,392, a record not likely to be broken unless by the champion himself.

5.—Kempton Park Jubilee Stakes, for which twenty ran, won by Avington.

Opening by King Leopold of the Antwerp Universal Exhibition.

Industrial Exhibition at Earl's Court inaugurated by the Lord Mayor.

7.—By an explosion at the Government Cordite Works near Waltham Abbey, four men were killed and twenty injured.

9.—Lord Rosebery's Ladas won the Two Thousand Guinea Stakes at Newmarket, beating Matchbox, Athlone, and five others.

11.—The One Thousand Guineas won by Amiable, Lady Minting and Mecca being second and third. Thirteen ran.

14.—Mr. Mundella resigned office as President of Board of Trade.

Whit Monday. Magnificent weather, and all places of amusement crowded to excess.

Ninth annual Parade of London Cart Horse Society in Regent's Park.

16.—Owing to a dispute with owners, several thousand London cab-drivers went out on strike.

17.—In brilliant weather the Queen visited Aldershot, and reviewed about twelve thousand men of all arms, under command of Duke of Connaught.

Manchester Cup race resulted in dead heat between Shancrotha and Red Ensign, sixteen starting.

18.—By command of the Queen, Madame Eleonora Duse and her company performed "La Locandiera" at Windsor Castle.

19.—Royal Italian Opera Company visited Windsor and gave a performance of "Faust" before the Queen.

International bicycle race from Bordeaux to Paris, 366 miles, for which eighty-seven started, won by Swiss champion, Lesna, in 25 hours 11 min., three Englishmen taking next places.

21.—Emile Henry, who committed the dynamite outrage at the Café Terminus, guillotined in Paris.

In presence of enormous and enthusiastic crowds, the Manchester Ship Canal formally opened by the Queen—the Lord Mayor of Manchester and Mayor of Salford being knighted on the occasion.

Six Anarchists, condemned to death for complicity in the bomb explosion at Liceo Theatre, shot at Barcelona.

24.—Seventy-fifth birthday of the Queen.

Newmarket Stakes easily won by Ladas.

G. P. Mills bicycled from Edinburgh to London in record time of 29 hours 28 min.

JUNE, 1894.

2.—Opening of International Congress of Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter Hall, numerous foreign and colonial delegates being present.

6.—As generally anticipated, Lord Rosebery's Ladas had little difficulty in adding the Derby to his already numerous victories, as he easily beat Matchbox, Reminder, and four others—the first instance of the "Blue Riband" of the Turf being won by a Prime Minister in office.

7.—Matchbox, second to Ladas in Two Thousand Guineas and Derby, purchased by Baron Hirsch for £15,000, and £5,000 additional should he win the Grand Prix.

8.—The Oaks won by Duke of Portland's Amiable, who beat Sweet Duchess, Sarana, and eight other fillies.

9.—Parliamentary Golf Handicap ended in the victory of Mr. A. J. Balfour, M.P., who defeated Mr. Nicholson, Clerk in House of Commons, in final heat.

11.—News from Tangiers of sudden death of Emperor of Morocco.

London Cab Strike settled on terms suggested by Home Secretary, acting as mediator between masters and men.

14.—By capsizing of a smack at Westport, County Mayo, forty Irish harvesters, about to embark for England, were drowned, nearly seventy others being saved by shore boats and those of a steamer in the bay.

Death in London of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, aged 73.

15.—Bill to legalise marriage with a deceased wife's sister again rejected by House of Lords, the votes being 129 to 120.

From explosions in two collieries at Trappau, in Silesia, 230 men perished.

16.—Attempt to shoot Signor Crispi, the Italian Prime Minister, while driving with his secretary in the streets of Rome. Fortunately neither gentleman was hit, but the would-be assassin was with difficulty rescued from the infuriated people.

17.—Grand Prix de Paris, regarded as a certainty for Matchbox, won by Dolma-Baghtché, who beat the English horse by a neck.

19-22.—At Ascot, the Ascot Stakes won by Aboriginee; Prince of Wales's Stakes by Contract; Royal Hunt Cup by Victor Wild; Gold Cup by La Flèche; and the rich Hardwicke Stakes by Ravensbury.

20.—Radical Conference at Leeds, convened by National Liberal Federation, for the purpose of calling upon Government to take measures for "ending" or "mending" the House of Lords!

23.—The Duchess of York gave birth to a son at White Lodge, Richmond, the infant Prince being the third heir in direct succession to the Throne.

Appalling explosion at Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd, near Pontypridd, the terrible death-roll amounting to nearly three hundred.

24.—M. Carnot, President of French Republic, mortally stabbed whilst driving to the Theatre at Lyons, dying in a few hours after receiving the fatal blow. The assassin, a young Italian Anarchist, named Santo, was seized red-handed, and with the utmost difficulty saved by the police from being torn to pieces by the infuriated crowd. The most intense indignation prevailed in France—and indeed throughout the civilised world—when this most deplorable event became known, and the greatest sympathy was universally evinced.

26.—Mansion House Fund opened for relief of the numerous widows and orphans left destitute in South Wales.

27.—M. Casimir-Périer elected President of the French Republic.

30.—Tower Bridge opened in state by Prince of Wales on behalf of the Queen, the Lord Mayor being made a Baronet, and the Sheriffs and Chairman of the Bridge House Committee, Knights, in commemoration of the event.

JULY, 1894.

1.—State funeral of M. Carnot in Paris, amid every indication of the profound grief of the enormous crowds who witnessed the solemn procession.

2.—Lord Russell appointed Lord Chief Justice of England.

4.—University cricket match won by Oxford.

5.—In the Princess of Wales's Stakes at Newmarket, Ladas suffered his first defeat, only obtaining third place, Isinglass and Bullingdon being first and second.

The Prince of Wales's "Britannia" defeated the American champion "Vigilant" on the Clyde, mid much excitement and after a splendid contest. A most unfortunate collision occurred in the race between "Satanita" and "Valkyrie," by which Lord Dunraven's famous yacht was immediately sunk, happily without loss of life.

At Herne Hill, H. E. Hill and P. Wheelock on a tandem safety covered a mile in 2 min. 2 sec., beating record for every class of machine.

6.—The Italian Opera Company gave a performance of "Philemon et Baucis" and "La Navarraise" at Windsor Castle by command of the Queen.

7.—At the Oval, Players defeated Gentlemen by an innings and 27 runs.

Amid great enthusiasm and after a very close race, "Britannia" again beat "Vigilant," winning by two minutes on time allowance.

Prince and Princess of Wales and their two daughters attended Speech Day at Harrow, the Princess distributing prizes.

9.—"Britannia" scored another victory over "Vigilant," winning by 9½ min.

Rioting at Chicago, and in Illinois generally, became so threatening that martial law was proclaimed throughout the State.

10.—For fourth time, "Britannia" defeated "Vigilant" by about 6 minutes.

In return match at Lord's, Gentlemen beat Players by an innings and 36 runs.

10, 11.—Severe earthquake shocks at Constantinople, occasioning great loss of life and immense destruction of property.

11.—The Queen visited Aldershot, and witnessed a grand torchlight tattoo, remaining at the Royal Pavilion for the night.

In fifth race with "Britannia," the "Vigilant" suffered her worst defeat, losing by 21½ minutes.

12.—"Britannia" concluded her series of victories over "Vigilant" on the Clyde by winning the sixth race by 2 minutes.

13.—Owing to energetic action of President Cleveland, the great American railway strike, which had almost assumed the aspect of civil war, was concluded.

14.—Eton and Harrow cricket match drawn, owing to heavy rain on first day.

Hurst Park Handicap won by Victor Wild.

16.—Christening of the infant son of Duke and Duchess of York at White Lodge, Richmond, in presence of the Queen, all the Royal Family, and many distinguished guests—the first two names given to the youthful Prince being Edward Albert.

The International Athletic contests between Oxford and Yale Universities at Queen's Club, resulted in Oxford winning five events to the Americans' three—one being drawn.

16, 17.—At Belfast, "Britannia" and "Vigilant" met in two events, the English yacht winning the first and the American the second—who thus scored her first victory this side the Atlantic.

17.—Budget carried in House of Commons by 283 votes to 263.

Mansion House Fund opened for relief of those left destitute by the earthquakes at Constantinople.

19.—In attempting to blow up a wreck in the Solent a quantity of gun-cotton exploded in the boat carrying out the operations, her crew of seven men being all killed.

20.—In Eclipse Stakes at Sandown, Isinglass again defeated Ladas, who was second.

20, 21.—At Kingston Regatta, "Britannia" and "Vigilant" competed in two more races, each winning one as at Belfast.

21.—At Bisley, the Queen's Prize of £250, with gold badge and medal, won by Private Rennie, 3rd Lanark.

Hackney Marshes opened as a public park.

23.—Race for the Wingfield Sculls and Amateur Championship of the Thames won by Mr. V. Nickalls, Mr. R. Guiness being his only opponent.

23–25.—In a series of three races in Cork Harbour, "Britannia" won the first and "Vigilant" the second. In third race, "Vigilant" did not compete, leaving the English yacht to sail over the course.

24.—News received that hostilities had begun in Corea between China and Japan.

25.—Liverpool Cup won by Son of a Gun.

28.—For third year running, F. W. Shorland was victorious in the twenty-four hours cycling contest at Herne Hill, covering record distance of 460 miles 1,296 yards.

The long distance amateur champion swimming race at Southampton won by J. H. Tyers, the holder.

At Mount's Bay, "Britannia" again beat "Vigilant" by over 5 min.

31.—Stewards' Cup at Goodwood won by Gangway.

AUGUST, 1894.

1–3.—At Goodwood Races, the Stakes secured by Spindle Leg; Sussex Stakes by Matchbox; Cup by Kilsallaghan; Rous Memorial by Saintly; Nassau Stakes by Throstle; and Chichester Stakes by Glengarry.

1.—War declared by Japan against China, sanguinary fighting, both by sea and land, having, however, taken place before the declaration. In the naval engagement a Chinese troop-ship was sunk with enormous loss of life, and in a battle on land the Japanese were decisively defeated.

Sir W. Harcourt entertained at a banquet by the Liberal Members of House of Commons to celebrate his Budget becoming law.

4.—In a private match on the Solent, "Vigilant" beat "Britannia" by 4½ min.

5.—Annual meeting of the National Artillery Association at Shoeburyness.

6.—Despite dull weather, Bank Holiday-makers were everywhere in evidence, all places of public resort being well filled.

Arrival of German Emperor at Cowes.

7.—Queen's Cup at Cowes won by Carina.

Brighton Cup won by Avington.

Annual meeting of British Association for the Advancement of Science, opened at Oxford under presidency of Lord Salisbury.

9, 10.—At Cowes, "Britannia" won the Town Cup, beating "Vigilant" by over 4 min. She also won the Meteor Challenge Shield for second time, the German Emperor's prize thus becoming the absolute property of her Royal owner.

12.—Linton, the English cyclist, beat world's record by covering fifty miles, in Paris, under two hours.

13, 14.—Visit of Emperor William to Aldershot, where he was the guest of the Duke of Connaught, and witnessed a grand review and a sham fight; afterwards leaving on his return to Germany.

14.—Irish Evicted Tenants' Bill rejected by House of Lords by 249 votes to 30.

Bomb outrage at Post Office, New Cross, a parcel placed in letter-box exploding and causing considerable damage to premises as well as injuring a passer-by.

15.—Ministerial Whitebait Dinner at "Ship," Greenwich, at which forty-four members of the Government were present.

16.—Caserio Santo, the assassin of President Carnot, executed at Lyons.

18.—Thousand Yards Amateur Salt-water Swimming Championship won by J. H. Tyers, at Southport, in record time of 15 min. 2 sec.

20, 21.—Announcements that the Argentine Federal Court had granted extradition of Jabez Balfour, and that he had appealed against decision.

At Royal Albert Yacht Club Regatta, "Satanita" beat "Britannia" for the Cup; the subsequent match between the same yachts, however, being easily won by the Prince's cutter.

25.—Parliament prorogued by Royal Commission.

26.—Great Radical demonstration in Hyde Park against House of Lords, calling on the Government to take measures to abolish "a mischievous and useless hereditary Chamber."

27.—After a close contest throughout the season for County Cricket Championship, Surrey secured the coveted position with eleven points, Yorkshire, last year's winner, being second with ten.

OBITUARY FOR 1893-1894.

As the century runs to its close, each recurring year shows a melancholy death-roll of those who have been more or less distinguished in the progress of the age, and who will figure in its annals even when forgotten by the men of the coming era.

The diplomatic world regrets the loss of SIR ROBERT MORIER, the Ambassador at St. Petersburg, not loved by the Bismarcks, but greatly esteemed by the Czar, who died on the 16th November; and SIR GERALD PORTAL, the vigorous envoy to Uganda, died of African fever on the 25th January, 1894. And the law has lost two distinguished judges: LORD HANNEN on the 30th March, and the venerable LORD CHIEF JUSTICE COLERIDGE on the 14th June, of the family made illustrious by the poet; and with these that learned ex-judge, SIR JAMES STEPHEN, on the 10th March, 1893. In EDWARD STANHOPE, M.P., ex-Secretary for War, the country has lost an able administrator; he died at the age—early for a politician—of fifty-four, on the 26th December. SIR PHILIP CUNLIFFE OWEN, K.C.B., great at exhibitions and artistic celebrations, expired on the 23rd March.

Among scientific men, a famous professor has departed in the person of JOHN TYNDALL, F.R.S., whose lectures at the Royal Institution made science almost fashionable, who died on the 4th December, 1893. And medicine is the poorer by the loss of the great physician, SIR ANDREW CLARK, who died, aged fifty-eight, on the 6th November. And biology has lost one of its most brilliant students by the death of PROFESSOR GEO. ROMAYNES, who died on the 23rd May, 1894.

In music the losses have been heavy. CHARLES GOUNOD, the eminent French composer, may head the list, who died on the 18th December, 1893, with SIR WILLIAM CUSINS, late "Master of musicke" to the Queen, on the 31st September. That excellent organist and composer, SIR GEORGE JOB ELVEY, died on the 9th December; and in May the venerable J. H. B. DANDO, aged eighty-eight years, who played the violin at the coronation of William the Fourth and Victoria. And among singers, MADAME PATEY, whose sudden death, almost in the concert room, on the 30th March was generally deplored; while that excellent pianist, HANS VON BULOW, died on the 12th February, 1894, aged sixty-four years; and shortly after, in the same month, the once well-known violinist, E. C. SIVORI, who passed away in his eightieth year.

Among authors the casualties have been numerous, although no name of pre-eminent rank has passed away. But the loss of PROFESSOR HENRY MORLEY, that veteran literary expert, in his seventy-second year, on the 14th May, will be severely felt; and the world of boys, both old and young, must regret the death, on the 8th February, 1894, of R. M. BALLANTYNE, who so lavishly provided those tales of battle and adventure in which they delight. And the girls of two hemispheres may regret the loss of MISS TUCKER, otherwise A. L. O. E., who died in December, 1893; and of ALICE KING, on the 26th April, both favourite story-tellers for the young. Two poets of high local fame, SAMUEL LAYCOCK, in the homely vernacular of Lancashire, on the 14th December, 1893, and EDWARD CAPERN, known as the Devon postman poet, on the 4th June, 1894, have also passed away.

In the more solid or academic branches of literature we have lost SIR WILLIAM SMITH, on the 7th October, 1893, the learned editor of the "Quarterly," and editor and author of many valuable works of reference; and Mr. WALTER PATER, the historian of the "Renaissance," died on the 30th July, 1894, in his fifty-fifth year. PROFESSOR JOWETT, the great Master of Balliol, and the popular translator of Plato, died on the 1st October in his eighty-seventh year. And on the last day of 1893, PROFESSOR MARSHALL, of Owen's College, was killed in climbing Scafell.

Of journalists are numbered with the dead, EDMUND YATES, of "The World," who died suddenly in harness on the 20th May; and a few days earlier M. JOHNSON, of the London staff of the Paris "Figaro," and a well-known figure among "first nighters"; and also MR. THOMAS LANE COWARD, the accomplished and genial manager of "The Morning Post," who died on the 27th June, 1894.

MR. HENRY VIZETELLY, who died on New Year's Day, 1894, was a publisher chiefly of what may be styled the "école libre," but he has also written some tolerably amusing "reminiscences."

Of dramatic writers, HENRY PETTITT is gone, and at the early age of forty-four years. He died on Christmas Eve, 1893. And a veteran who had played many parts, and written many too, was EDWARD STIRLING, husband of a most gifted artist, who wrote some annals of Old Drury, and died on the 12th August, 1894, in his eighty-third year.

And from the stage of life has retired ADA SWANBOROUGH, a graceful and talented performer, who died on the 12th December, 1893. And MISS E. "BRUNTON," of the talented Robertson family, better known, perhaps, on the provincial than the London stage, died in the previous month. Another loss has been sustained by the profession in the death of DAVID JAMES, the famous impersonator of Perkyn Middlewick, in "Our Boys," who died on the 3rd October, 1893.

From among artists has departed FORD MADOX BROWN, a master of his own school, whose historic frescoes in Manchester Town Hall are monumental works of the kind, who died on the 6th October, 1893, in his sixty-second year. And among explorers we have lost the venerable leader, SIR HENRY LAYARD, of Nineveh, less notable in more recent years as a diplomatist, who died on the 5th July, in his seventy-eighth year. And SIR SAMUEL BAKER is dead, the brilliant traveller and discoverer, whose books first opened the Dark Continent to general readers. He died on the 30th December, aged seventy-two. And CAPTAIN LOVETT CAMERON, also a great African traveller, was killed on the 26th March by a fall from his horse.

CALENDAR FOR 1895.

JANUARY.

1	T	Circumcision. Maria Edgeworth born, 1767.
2	W	Professor James Stuart born, 1843.
3	Th	Douglas Jerrold born, 1803.
4	F	Sir Isaac Pitman born, 1811.
5	S	Captain Stephen Decatur born, 1779.
6	S	2nd Sunday after Christmas. Epiphany.
7	M	Robert Nicholl born, 1814.
8	T	Alma Tadema born, 1836.
9	W	Napoleon III. died, 1873.
10	Th	Royal Exchange burnt, 1838.
11	F	Sir John MacDonald died, 1891.
12	S	Lord Houghton born, 1858.
13	S	1st Sunday after Epiphany.
14	M	Duke of Clarence died, 1892.
15	T	E. M. Ward, R.A., died, 1879.
16	W	Battle of Corunna, 1809.
17	Th	Battle of Abou Klea, 1885.
18	F	German Empire proclaimed, 1871.
19	S	Paris Bordone died, 1570.
20	S	2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
21	M	Louis XVI. executed, 1793.
22	T	Capture of Mooltan, 1849.
23	W	William Pitt died, 1806.
24	Th	Charles James Fox born, 1749.
25	F	Conversion of St. Paul.
26	S	Death of Gordon, 1855.
27	S	3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
28	M	Battle of Aliwal, 1846.
29	T	Emanuel Swedenborg born, 1688.
30	W	Westland Marston born, 1819.
31	Th	Ben Jonson born, 1574.

Moon's Phases.

4th.	First Quarter ..	7h.	52m.	Morning.
11th.	Full Moon ..	6	50	Morning.
17th.	Last Quarter ..	10	55	Afternoon.
25th.	New Moon ..	9	26	Afternoon.

FEBRUARY.

1	F	John Lemprière born, 1824.
2	S	Purification. Candlemas.
3	S	4th Sunday after Epiphany.
4	M	George Lillo, dramatist, born, 1693.
5	T	Sir Robert Peel born, 1788; died, 2nd July,
6	W	Queen Anne born, 1665. [1850.
7	Th	Charles Dickens born, 1812; died, 9th June,
8	F	Queen Mary Tudor born, 1515. [1870.
9	S	Lord Darnley murdered, 1567.
10	S	Septuagesima.
11	M	Thomas A. Edison born, 1847.
12	T	President Abraham Lincoln born, 1809.
13	W	Richard Wagner died, 1883.
14	Th	St. Valentine.
15	F	Sir Edward Clarke born, 1841.
16	S	Philip Melancthon born, 1497.
17	S	Sexagesima.
18	M	Charles Lamb born, 1775.
19	T	N. Copernicus born, 1473.
20	W	David Garrick born, 1716.
21	Th	Battle of Guzerat, 1849.
22	F	George Washington born, 1732.
23	S	Arrest of Cato Street Conspirators, 1820.
24	S	Quinquagesima. St. Matthias.
25	M	Sir Christopher Wren died, 1723.
26	T	John Philip Kemble born, 1823.
27	W	Ash Wednesday.
28	Th	R. H. Froude died, 1836.

Moon's Phases.

3rd.	First Quarter ..	0h.	16m.	Morning.
9th.	Full Moon ..	5	23	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	1	9	Afternoon.
24th.	New Moon ..	4	44	Afternoon.

MARCH.

1	F	St. David's Day.
2	S	Horace Walpole died, 1797.
3	S	1st Sunday in Lent.
4	M	John Timbs died, 1875.
5	T	Covent Garden Theatre burnt, 1856.
6	W	Sir John Hawkwood died, 1393.
7	Th	SS. Perpetua and Felicitas.
8	F	Battle of Aboukir, 1801.
9	S	William Cobbett born, 1762.
10	S	2nd Sunday in Lent.
11	M	Torquato Tasso born, 1544.
12	T	B. W. Leader, A.R.A., born, 1831.
13	W	Aug. J. C. Hare born, 1834.
14	Th	Admiral Byng shot, 1757.
15	F	J. J. E. Reclus born, 1830.
16	S	Gustavus III. of Sweden assassinated, 1792.
17	S	3rd Sunday in Lent. St. Patrick's Day.
18	M	Sir Robert Walpole died, 1745.
19	T	Bishop Ken died, 1711.
20	W	Thomas Webster, R.A., born, 1800.
21	Th	Robert Bruce born, 1274.
22	F	Rosalie Bonheur born, 1822.
23	S	Battle of Novara, 1849.
24	S	4th Sunday in Lent.
25	M	Annunciation. Lady Day.
26	T	Sir John Vanbrugh died, 1726.
27	W	John Bright died, 1889.
28	Th	Dr. Andrew Kippis born, 1725.
29	F	John Keble died, 1866.
30	S	Tiberius Cavallo, F.R.S., born, 1749.
31	S	5th Sunday in Lent.

Moon's Phases.

4th.	First Quarter ..	0h.	40m.	Afternoon.
11th.	Full Moon ..	3	38	Morning.
18th.	Last Quarter ..	5	32	Morning.
26th.	New Moon ..	10	25	Morning.

APRIL.

1	M	Prince Bismarck born, 1815.
2	T	Emile Zola born, 1840.
3	W	George Herbert, poet, born, 1593.
4	Th	St. Ambrose.
5	F	Thomas Hobbes born, 1588.
6	S	James Mill born, 1773.
7	S	Palm Sunday.
8	M	Von Humboldt died, 1835.
9	T	Adelina Patti born, 1843.
10	W	Pizarro beheaded, 1548.
11	Th	Charles Reade, novelist, died, 1884.
12	F	Good Friday.
13	S	A. Comte died, 1857.
14	S	Easter Sunday.
15	M	Bank Holiday.
16	T	Adolphe Thiers born, 1797.
17	W	George Frederick Cooke, actor, born, 1756.
18	Th	Geo. H. Lewis born, 1819.
19	F	Primrose Day. Lord Beaconsfield died, 1881.
20	S	Napoleon III. born, 1808.
21	S	Low Sunday.
22	M	Henry Fielding born, 1707.
23	T	J. M. W. Turner, R.A., born, 1775. St. George.
24	W	Anthony Trollope born, 1815.
25	Th	St. Mark.
26	F	David Hume born, 1711.
27	S	Edward Whymper born, 1840.
28	S	2nd Sunday after Easter.
29	M	General Boulanger born, 1837.
30	Tu	Richard Redgrave, R.A., born, 1804.

Moon's Phases.

2nd.	First Quarter ..	9h.	28m.	Afternoon.
9th.	Full Moon ..	1	48	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	11	22	Afternoon.
25th.	New Moon ..	1	11	Morning.

MAY.

1	W	SS. Philip and James.
2	Th	William Camden born, 1550.
3	F	Archbishop Sharp killed, 1679.
4	S	T. H. Huxley born, 1825.
5	S	3rd Sunday after Easter.
6	M	Constable Bourbon killed, 1527
7	T	Lord Rosebery born, 1847.
8	W	A. R. Le Sage born, 1668.
9	Th	Fouché, Duke of Otranto, born, 1763.
10	F	Indian Mutiny began, 1857.
11	S	Charles Macklin, dramatist, born, 1690.
12	S	4th Sunday after Easter.
13	M	Sir Arthur Sullivan born, 1842.
14	T	Henry Grattan died, 1820.
15	W	Florence Nightingale born, 1820.
16	Th	Felicia Hemans died, 1835.
17	F	Timothy M. Healy born, 1855.
18	S	Alphonse Daudet born, 1840.
19	S	Rogation Sunday.
20	M	John Stuart Mill born, 1806.
21	T	Albrecht Dürer born, 1471.
22	W	Alexander Pope, poet, born, 1688.
23	Th	Ascension Day.
24	F	Queen Victoria born, 1819.
25	S	Princess Christian born, 1846.
26	S	Sunday after Ascension.
27	M	Princess Mathilde Bonaparte born, 1820.
28	T	Thomas Moore born, 1780.
29	W	Empress Josephine died, 1814.
30	Th	Joan of Arc burnt, 1431.
31	F	Walt Whitman born, 1819.

Moon's Phases.

2nd.	First Quarter ..	3h.	44m.	Morning.
8th.	Full Moon ..	11	59	Afternoon.
16th.	Last Quarter ..	5	44	Afternoon.
24th.	New Moon ..	0	46	Afternoon.
31st.	First Quarter ..	8	48	Morning.

JULY.

1	M	Sir Robert Ball, astronomer, born, 1840.
2	T	J. J. Rousseau died, 1778.
3	W	Louis XI. born, 1423.
4	Th	Giuseppe Garibaldi born, 1807.
5	F	Sarah Siddons born, 1755.
6	S	Battle of Sedgmoor, 1685.
7	S	4th Sunday after Trinity.
8	M	Battle of Pultawa, 1709.
9	T	Henry Hallam born, 1777.
10	W	John Calvin born, 1509.
11	Th	W. E. Forster born, 1818.
12	F	Josiah Wedgwood born, 1730.
13	S	Marat assassinated, 1793.
14	S	5th Sunday after Trinity.
15	M	Cardinal Manning born, 1808. St. Swithin.
16	T	Sir Thomas More beheaded, 1535.
17	W	Dr. Isaac Watts born, 1674.
18	Th	W. M. Thackeray born, 1811.
19	F	Alfred Waterhouse, architect, born, 1830.
20	S	St. Margaret.
21	S	6th Sunday after Trinity.
22	M	Charles Landseer, R.A., died. 1879.
23	T	William Wilberforce died, 1833.
24	W	Simon Bolivar born, 1783.
25	Th	St. James, Apostle.
26	F	St. Anne.
27	S	Thomas Campbell born, 1777.
28	S	7th Sunday after Trinity.
29	M	Spanish Armada dispersed. 1588.
30	T	Thomas Gray, poet, died. 1771.
31	W	Paul Du Chaillu born, 1835.

Moon's Phases.

6th.	Full Moon ..	11h.	29m.	Afternoon.
15th.	Last Quarter ..	3	31	Morning.
22nd.	New Moon ..	5	32	Morning.
28th.	First Quarter ..	8	36	Afternoon.

JUNE.

1	S	Lord Howe's naval victory, 1794.
2	S	Whit Sunday.
3	M	Bank Holiday.
4	T	Lord Wolseley born, 1833.
5	W	Adam Smith born, 1723.
6	Th	Pierre Corneille born, 1606.
7	F	J. Rennie born, 1761.
8	S	J. E. Millais, R.A., born, 1829.
9	S	Trinity Sunday.
10	M	Sir Edwin Arnold born, 1832.
11	T	St. Barnabas.
12	W	Rev. Charles Kingsley born, 1819.
13	Th	Corpus Christi. Dr. Arnold born, 1795.
14	F	Battle of Naseby, 1645.
15	S	Edward the Black Prince born, 1330.
16	S	1st Sunday after Trinity.
17	M	John Wesley born, 1703.
18	T	Battle of Waterloo. 1815.
19	W	Rev. C. H. Spurgeon born, 1834.
20	Th	Queen's Accession, 1837.
21	F	John Skelton died, 1529.
22	S	Macchiavelli died, 1527.
23	S	2nd Sunday after Trinity.
24	M	St. John Baptist. Quarter Day.
25	T	John Horne Tooke born, 1736.
26	W	George Morland born, 1763.
27	Th	Charles XII. of Sweden born, 1682.
28	F	Coronation Day.
29	S	St. Peter.
30	S	3rd Sunday after Trinity.

Moon's Phases.

7th.	Full Moon ..	11h.	0m.	Morning.
15th.	Last Quarter ..	11	28	Morning.
22nd.	New Moon ..	9	51	Afternoon.
29th.	First Quarter ..	2	1	Afternoon.

AUGUST.

1	Th	Mrs. Inchbald died, 1821.
2	F	Captain Marryat died, 1848.
3	S	Christina Nilsson born, 1843.
4	S	8th Sunday after Trinity.
5	M	Bank Holiday.
6	T	Lord Tennyson born, 1809.
7	W	Queen Caroline died, 1821.
8	Th	Sir Arthur Otway born, 1822.
9	F	Von Schlegel died, 1829.
10	S	C. W. Dilke died, 1864.
11	S	9th Sunday after Trinity.
12	M	Grouse Shooting begins.
13	T	Jeremy Taylor died, 1667.
14	W	George Colman, elder, died, 1794.
15	Th	Admiral Robert Blake born, 1599.
16	F	Ben Jonson died, 1637.
17	S	Matthew Boulton, machinist, died, 1809.
18	S	10th Sunday after Trinity.
19	M	Henry Kirke White born, 1785.
20	T	Kenny Meadows died, 1874.
21	W	Professor Tyndall born, 1820.
22	Th	Richard III. killed, 1485.
23	F	Sir Astley Cooper, surgeon, born, 1768.
24	S	St. Bartholomew.
25	S	11th Sunday after Trinity.
26	M	Prince Albert born, 1819.
27	T	Titian died, 1576.
28	W	Von Goethe born, 1749.
29	Th	Battle of Aspromonte, 1862.
30	F	M. J. Chenier, poet, born, 1764.
31	S	Thomas Miller, novelist, born, 1808.

Moon's Phases.

5th.	Full Moon ..	1h.	51m.	Afternoon.
13th.	Last Quarter ..	5	19	Afternoon.
20th.	New Moon ..	0	56	Afternoon.
27th.	First Quarter ..	5	43	Morning.

SEPTEMBER.

1	S	12th Sunday after Trinity.
2	M	Capitulation of Sedan, 1870. Partridge Shooting begins.
3	T	Eugène de Beauharnais born, 1781.
4	W	Sir Wilfred Lawson born, 1829.
5	Th	John Dalton, chemist, born, 1756.
6	F	Marquis de Lafayette born, 1757.
7	S	Hannah More died, 1833.
8	S	13th Sunday after Trinity.
9	M	Battle of Flodden Field, 1513.
10	T	Mungo Park born, 1771.
11	W	Lady Palmerston died, 1869.
12	Th	F. P. G. Guizot died, 1874.
13	F	Andrea Mantegna died, 1506.
14	S	Holy Cross Day.
15	S	14th Sunday after Trinity.
16	M	F. S. Haden born, 1818.
17	T	Marquis de Condorcet born, 1743.
18	W	William Collins, R.A., born, 1788.
19	Th	Henry Lord Brougham born, 1779.
20	F	Battle of the Alma, 1854.
21	S	St. Matthew.
22	S	15th Sunday after Trinity.
23	M	Jane Taylor, author, born, 1783.
24	T	Paracelsus died, 1541.
25	W	Felicia Hemans born, 1794.
26	Th	Admiral Collingwood born, 1748.
27	F	Paul Féval born, 1817.
28	S	F. T. Palgrave born, 1824.
29	S	16th Sunday after Trinity. St. Michael and
30	M	Bishop Percy died, 1811. [All Angels.

Moon's Phases.

4th.	Full Moon ..	5h.	55m.	Morning.
12th.	Last Quarter ..	4	51	Morning.
18th.	New Moon ..	8	55	Afternoon.
25th.	First Quarter ..	6	23	Afternoon.

NOVEMBER.

1	F	All Saints' Day.
2	S	All Souls'.
3	S	21st Sunday after Trinity.
4	M	Edmund Kean born, 1787.
5	T	Gunpowder Plot.
6	W	Princess Charlotte died, 1817.
7	Th	Sir Martin Frobisher killed, 1594.
8	F	Madame Roland guillotined, 1793.
9	S	Prince of Wales born, 1841.
10	S	22nd Sunday after Trinity.
11	M	St. Martin. Martinmas.
12	T	Richard Baxter born, 1615.
13	W	George Fox died, 1690.
14	Th	Loss of the *Prince* off Balaclava, 1854.
15	F	Sir William Herschell born, 1738.
16	S	Francis Danbey, artist, born, 1793.
17	S	23rd Sunday after Trinity.
18	M	Earl Lytton (Owen Meredith) born, 1831.
19	T	Charles I. born, 1600.
20	W	St. Edmund, King and Martyr.
21	Th	Empress Frederick of Germany born, 1840.
22	F	St. Cecilia. "George Eliot" born, 1819.
23	S	Father Ignatius born, 1837.
24	S	24th Sunday after Trinity.
25	M	Dr. Isaac Watts died, 1748.
26	T	Empress Dagmar of Russia born, 1847.
27	W	Frank Dicksee, R.A., born, 1853.
28	Th	William Blake born, 1757.
29	F	Sir Philip Sidney born, 1554.
30	S	St. Andrew. Dean Swift born, 1667.

Moon's Phases.

2nd.	Full Moon ..	3h.	18m.	Afternoon.
9th.	Last Quarter ..	11	7	Afternoon.
16th.	New Moon ..	5	11	Afternoon.
24th.	First Quarter ..	7	19	Morning.

OCTOBER.

1	T	Mrs. Annie Besant born, 1847.
2	W	Cardinal Borromeo born, 1538.
3	Th	Treaty of Limerick, 1691.
4	F	Felix Pyat born, 1810.
5	S	Horace Walpole born, 1715.
6	S	17th Sunday after Trinity.
7	M	Battle of Lepanto, 1571.
8	T	Count Alfieri, poet, died, 1803.
9	W	Cervantes born, 1547.
10	Th	Sir William Minto born, 1845.
11	F	Old Michaelmas Day.
12	S	John Zisca died, 1424.
13	S	18th Sunday after Trinity.
14	M	Sir William Harcourt born, 1827.
15	T	Alexander Tytler born, 1747.
16	W	Kosciuszko died, 1817.
17	Th	Isa Craig born, 1831.
18	F	St. Luke.
19	S	Charles R. Leslie, R.A., born, 1797.
20	S	19th Sunday after Trinity.
21	M	S. T. Coleridge born, 1772.
22	T	Sara Bernhardt born, 1844.
23	W	Ann Oldfield, actress, died, 1730.
24	Th	Prince Poniatowski killed, 1813.
25	F	Battle of Agincourt, 1415.
26	S	G. J. Danton born, 1759.
27	S	20th Sunday after Trinity.
28	M	SS. Simon and Jude.
29	T	James Boswell born, 1740.
30	W	Sir H. James born, 1828.
31	Th	John Keats born, 1795.

Moon's Phases.

3rd.	Full Moon ..	10h.	47m.	Afternoon.
11th.	Last Quarter ..	2	34	Afternoon.
18th.	New Moon ..	6	10	Morning.
25th.	First Quarter ..	11	4	Morning.

DECEMBER.

1	S	Advent Sunday.
2	M	Coup d'Etat, Paris, 1851.
3	T	Chief Justice Lord Coleridge born, 1820.
4	W	Thomas Carlyle born, 1795.
5	Th	Mozart died, 1792.
6	F	Thomas Shadwell, dramatist, died, 1692.
7	S	Marshal Ney shot, 1815.
8	S	2nd Sunday in Advent.
9	M	John Milton born, 1608.
10	T	Sir Henry Ponsonby born, 1825.
11	W	Sir David Brewster born, 1781.
12	Th	Erasmus Darwin born, 1731.
13	F	Dr. Samuel Johnson died, 1784.
14	S	George Washington died, 1799.
15	S	3rd Sunday in Advent.
16	M	Jane Austen born, 1775.
17	T	Thomas Woolner, R.A., born, 1826.
18	W	Alexandra Chatrain born, 1826.
19	Th	Toulon recaptured, 1793.
20	F	Alfred Bunn, dramatist, died, 1860.
21	S	St. Thomas.
22	S	4th Sunday in Advent.
23	M	Sir Martin Shee, P.R.A., born, 1770.
24	T	John Morley, M.P., born, 1838.
25	W	Christmas Day.
26	Th	St. Stephen. Bank Holiday.
27	F	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.
28	S	Innocents' Day.
29	S	1st Sunday after Christmas. W. E. Gladstone
30	M	John Phillips, poet, born, 1676. [born, 1809.
31	T	John Wicliffe died, 1384.

Moon's Phases.

2nd.	Full Moon ..	6h.	38m.	Morning.
9th.	Last Quarter ..	7	9	Morning.
16th.	New Moon ..	6	30	Morning.
24th.	First Quarter ..	5	21	Morning.
31st.	Full Moon ..	8	31	Afternoon.

Golden Number	xv	Solar Cycle	28
Epact	4	Dominical Letter ..	F
Roman Indiction ..	8		
Julian Period	6608		

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Virtues of Eggs.—The egg is a very useful household remedy, and as it is one ready to hand it should be more appreciated than it is. For burns and scalds (which are apt to occur in most kitchens) there is nothing more soothing for immediate use than the white of an egg. It makes a skin over the burn, in the same way that collodion does, and is more soothing. In cases of burning the great point is excluding the air as much as possible, and to prevent inflammation. As the white of an egg is the best remedy for this, it should be used at once. A fresh egg is one of the best remedies for dysentery. When beaten up lightly and swallowed it tends to soothe the intestines, and gradually lessens the inflammation of the stomach. Sick people will often swallow the yolk of an egg with a few drops of vinegar and a little pepper, in the same way they would an oyster, when they have difficulty in taking nourishment. Anæmic patients find an egg beaten up with milk very nourishing and easy to digest.

Rolf Boldrewood, the leading author of Australia, lives in a delightfully rustic bungalow at Albury, up-country. He is very careful about the names of his characters and the titles of his books, and he agrees with R. L. Stevenson that long descriptions of scenery would kill any book. He gets up in the morning at five o'clock and does a couple of hours' work, and after breakfast attends the police court in his capacity as magistrate. He inspects the prison cells in the afternoon, works in his office, and frequently has to administer justice at places many miles away. After dinner he settles down to work with his wife and daughter chattering around him, and about half-past ten he adjourns to a small inn and enjoys a pipe, for he makes it a practice never to smoke in the presence of his family.

A Very Inexpensive Pancake may be made by steeping, after breakfast, a few pieces of waste bread. In the evening drain off the water, and beat well with a fork, adding one or two eggs and a quarter of a pint of milk. Dredge in a little flour till of the consistency of batter. Add a pinch of salt and carbonate of soda. Put a good piece of butter in the pan, and fry in the usual way, dredging well with sifted sugar.

To Smoke Fish at Home.—Take an old hogshead, fill up all the crevices, and fix a place to put a cross-stick near the bottom, on which to hang the article to be smoked. Next, in the side near the top, cut a hole, to introduce an iron pan, filled with sawdust and small pieces of green wood. Having turned the tub upside down, hang the articles to be smoked upon the cross-stick. Introduce the iron pan in the opening, and place a piece of red-hot iron in the pan, cover it with sawdust, and all will be complete. Let a large fish remain about twenty-four hours, and keep up a good smoke.

On Attics.—In many houses, which are otherwise very tidy and well regulated, rubbish of all sorts, from old boots and shoes and bottles to furniture, is stored in the attic in preparation for a day of turning out and a bonfire which, alas! never comes off. Meanwhile, it is impossible to calculate how much dust and unwholesomeness drifts down into the house from this neglected spot, and the consequence is that it is difficult to keep the rest of the house free from dust. There is nothing more absurd really than this hoarding of trash, and all that is needed to disperse it is a long morning's work of sorting, and then the attic should be whitewashed and thoroughly cleaned. The windows of attics must be opened on every fine day for a few hours. There is an old-fashioned idea, and I wish it were more generally remembered, "to make a house wholesome the attics should be kept clean, and the cellars dry." I would remind my careless readers that a single woollen scarf or pair of stockings left lying about for a long while in an attic may alone bring enough moths to prove a plague to the whole house.

Apples.—The medicinal value of apples is not half appreciated. To those of sedentary habits whose livers are sluggish, the acids of the apple serve to eliminate from the body noxious matters, which, if retained, would make the brain heavy and dull or bring about jaundice, skin eruptions, and kindred evils. The malic acid of ripe apples, raw or cooked, will neutralise any excess of chalky matter engendered by eating too much meat. It is also true that such ripe fruit as the apple, pear, and plum, taken without sugar, diminish acidity of the stomach rather than provoke it, as is popularly but erroneously supposed. These juices are converted into alkaline carbonates which tend to counteract acidity.

SALT WATER BATHING AT HOME.—A sponge bath of salt water is extremely beneficial at all seasons of the year, although especially so in winter, as those accustomed to it are less liable to take cold. This can be taken by itself, or in addition to a warm or cold bath. Sea salt or rock salt can be used. Dissolve about half-a teaspoonful of the salt in a quart of water of the same temperature as the room; with this sponge the body quickly, and rub briskly after it. All cold baths should be taken with great rapidity if one would have the full benefit of them. Ten minutes is quite sufficient to have the bathing and drying completed; and if it can be done in less time so much the better. Care also should be taken not to stand directly in a draught while the body is wet, to work fast, and be sure to be perfectly dry before putting on any clothing. A lack of attention to these details sometimes brings unpleasant results, which leads to the belief that a cold bath cannot be endured, when, in reality, it is only mismanagement in taking it which creates harmful effects.

CHILDREN, REMEMBER MOTHER!—As we go on in life, we find more and more that there is no love so perfect, so unchanging as a mother's—the love that abides fast where all else wavers. But we often see sons and daughters who seem to be careless of this treasure. They fail to realise how precious it is. They try to "do right," to be kind, but they omit many little offices of love which would brighten the sunset hours of the dear mother. They love her, of course they do; but the outward tokens are withheld. Often she sits lonely, missing her early friends, perhaps her husband, gone before; and her children, immersed in care or pleasure, are apparently oblivious of the fact that the one to whom they owe most, whom they love most, is left to desolation of spirit, yearning for a word of tenderness from her own children. Show your mother that you love her. Let your affection wrap her around like a garment. Speak the kind, reverent, cheerful word now; see that she has every comfort now; soon it will be too late. In the evening twilight sit close beside her. Clasp the gentle hands. Touch the white hair gently. Remember that soon the tender mother-eyes will be closed; the dear lips speechless. Then the words and acts of affection, which are now possible, cannot reach her. Never more can you speak one syllable of love to her, or perform one act of kindness for your mother.

CREAMED FISH.—One pint of cold cooked fish, one tablespoonful of butter, two tablespoonfuls of flour, one pint of milk, salt and pepper. Cream the butter and flour together; stir in the milk; add the salt and pepper; pour over the fire in a saucepan, and stir until it boils. Have the fish free from the bones and skin, and neatly shredded into a shallow baking dish; pour over the sauce. Sprinkle the top with fine sifted breadcrumbs, and place in the oven till of a light brown. Any fish can be cooked in this way; but a whitefish, cod, or halibut will look best.

FONDU.—This is a foreign dish made as follows:—Quarter pound skim cheese, grated, half cup of milk, three eggs, quarter teaspoonful of mustard, half saltspoonful of white pepper, a few grains of cayenne, one tablespoonful of butter, and two tablespoonfuls of baked flour. A grating of nutmeg, and bicarbonate of potash to cover the end of a penknife. Add the potash to the milk, then the other ingredients, putting the eggs in last. Stir till the mixture is smooth, and bake in patty-pans or paper cases. Eat immediately, very hot.

AN extraordinary adventure befel the Duke and Duchess d'Antuni on their wedding-day. The marriage festivities over, the bride and bridegroom drove from Palermo to Siarra, the Duke's property, where the honeymoon was to be spent. At the entrance of the village a vast crowd of peasants came out to welcome them. Then the Duke was invited to alight and drink some wine with his tenants. While he was thus engaged he was startled by loud screams from the direction of the carriage, and, looking up, he saw to his horror that the coachman had been ousted from his place on the box by a young peasant, while another had seated himself beside the terrified bride, who called to her husband to rescue her, while the horses were lashed into a furious gallop, and she was rapidly driven away. Beside himself at this extraordinary outrage, the Duke endeavoured to follow the vehicle, but was held back by the peasants, who explained that it was merely a custom in that part of the country, and that the bride could be ransomed for the price of a cask of wine.

MACARONI WITH CHEESE.—Prepare macaroni with cream sauce, and pour into a buttered scalloped dish. Have half a cup of grated cheese and half a cup of breadcrumbs mixed, sprinkle over the macaroni, and place in the oven to brown; it will take about twenty minutes.

WHY ARE WE NOT ALL CORPULENT?—This is a question we find answered by the latest specialist in corpulency, a man who, in our opinion, has done more to cure this distressing incumbrance than all the other so-called adipose-therapeutists put together. We have Mr. Russell's new edition before us, entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), wherein he explains that many men can eat an abundance of everything and yet appear lean and hungry, while the next unfortunate cannot eat but scantily without building up a huge frame of unwieldy bulk. Thin persons, the author explains, generally have a very strong liver, which vigorously separates from the blood any superfluity of its fatty constituents; per contra, the liver of the victim to obesity is constitutionally weak, hence it fails, without assistance, to throw off the carbonaceous and fat-forming foods. The book from which we derive this information is published by Mr. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., who has succeeded in manufacturing a purely vegetable compound which has an almost magical effect in the reduction of unhealthy fat. Experimentally it has been given in large doses to those who only carry an amount of fat conducive to the proper production of heat, and the result is that the decoction will not have the remotest effect—not the slightest reduction of weight takes place, while in the case of a superfluity of unhealthy adipose tissue the individual frequently loses 2 lbs., and much more in serious cases, in twenty-four hours. We should have liked to have pursued this matter further, for it is far more interesting in our opinion than experimenting upon bees, rats, cats, and such like, for what may appear startling in the results of certain foods given to the smaller animals may not be so conclusive or applicable in the case of human beings. We can with pleasure advise our readers to get this book and read for themselves, and moreover no one can complain of the price, as it only costs four stamps.

The following are extracts from other journals:

GOOD NEWS FOR STOUT PERSONS.—It does not follow that a person need to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that any one can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but this is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14 lbs. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book (256 pages) only costs 4d., and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really well worth reading.—"Forget-me-Not."

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.—Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month, with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient, in some cases, may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending four penny stamps, a book entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), containing a reprint of Press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals—British and foreign—and other interesting particulars, including the book containing the "recipe," can be had post-free from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—"Belfast News Letter."

THE SECRET OF MAKING A GOOD CAKE, in most cases, lies with the oven. When the cake is first put into the oven it should be hot, and be allowed to cool slowly as the cake gradually cooks. A simple way to test the heat of an oven is to hold the hand inside for about twenty seconds. If the heat can be borne for that length of time the oven is in the right condition for baking. Many people spoil their cakes by not allowing them sufficient time in the oven. Before removing from the oven insert a skewer, and if it comes out clean the cake is cooked. Let the cake remain in the tin for ten minutes after it comes out of the oven, and then turn out, and leave it on a sieve until cold.

RIPE TOMATO PICKLE.—If you are fortunate enough to be able to grow sufficient tomatoes in your garden, you will make this pickle very easily. If not, I should advise your procuring some good foreign ones, which are to be had inexpensively at this time of the year. Prick the tomatoes with a fork, and then place a layer of them in a bottle, and over it sprinkle a teaspoonful of chopped onion and a little salt. Continue this until the jar is full, and let it stand for a week. The contents should be put in a dish to drain. Gently squeeze each tomato to rid it of the salt water. Place it in a jar, and cover with the best vinegar, seasoned with a chili, a little scraped horseradish, and some mustard-seeds.

TAKE an apple and make a stitch in the side just under the skin, drawing the thread carefully through; then place the point of the needle into the hole from which it has just come and take another stitch, continuing this until the circle is completed, only make a point of bringing the thread in the last instance through the hole made by the first insertion of the needle. Cross the ends of the thread, and pull gently, and the apple will come in half, although the skin will be whole.

ALL legal treatises and documents during the twelfth and two following centuries were written in a stiff, affected, and undecipherable hand called "court hand." It was intentionally illegible, that the knowledge of the law might be effectually kept from the common people. The manuscripts of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries seem to be all written by the same hand. This was due to the influence of Charlemagne, who selected a particular style of handwriting, adopted it, and ordered every scribe to write after that as a copy.

POT-POURRI.—Dry weather is exceedingly favourable for making pot-pourri, and this is just the season of the year for it. It should be made thus: Take a large quantity of fresh rose-leaves, dry them in the sun, turn about constantly, so that all get perfectly dry and crisp; add sweet-scented geranium, lemon verbena, honeysuckle, lavender, et cetera, all of which must be thoroughly dry. After about a fortnight's drying, pepper the leaves with powdered orris-root, cinnamon, and bay salt; about a tablespoonful of each will be required. Then add twenty drops of oil of cloves, ditto lavender, half that quantity of oil of cinnamon, and as much oil of musk as you feel entitled to spend on your pot-pourri. This is the most expensive item in the preparation. Mix all well together, and place in a wide-mouthed jar. For the first year or two the leaves should be stirred constantly. Keep your jar in a dry place, and each year you will be more delighted with its fragrant aroma.

EDISON is a great lover of practical jokes. Once upon a time, when the phonograph was more of a novelty than it is at the present time, he hid one of these machines in a grandfather's clock, which stood in the guest chamber. One night as a friend was preparing to get into bed he suddenly heard a voice exclaim, "Eleven o'clock, one hour more." He crept into bed and lay perfectly still, frightened out of his life and hardly daring to breathe. At midnight he heard the same weird voice exclaim, "Twelve o'clock, prepare to die." This was more than mortal flesh could stand, and, springing out of bed with a shriek, he flew out of the room into the arms of Edison and another friend, who had been sitting up awaiting his appearance.

LORD ROSEBERY tells a story in connection with the victory of Ladas that will be interesting to students of omens. The day before he ran the first Ladas, he, at the time an undergraduate at Oxford, was leaving a house in Park Lane when he noticed in the grass plot a dead hedgehog. Like a true sportsman he thought that portended something, and certainly his first Ladas was dead beat in the race. On the morning of this year's Derby, going out to see Ladas take his morning gallop, the Premier's path was crossed by a hedgehog, this time particularly alive. Between the two Derby days, separated by twenty-five years, Lord Rosebery had not set eyes on a hedgehog, and he thinks the coincidence is noteworthy.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE

ORIGINAL AND GENUINE



IS THE GREAT SPECIFIC FOR CHOLERA, DYSENTERY.

COUGHS, COLDS, ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Dr. J. C. BROWNE (late Army Medical Staff) DISCOVERED a REMEDY to denote which he coined the word CHLORODYNE. Dr. Browne is the SOLE INVENTOR, and, as the composition of Chlorodyne cannot possibly be discovered by Analysis (organic substances defying elimination), and since the formula has never been published, it is evident that any statement to the effect that a compound is identical with Dr. Browne's Chlorodyne *must be false.*

This Caution is necessary, as many persons deceive purchasers by false representations.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Vice Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD stated publicly in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was UNDOUBTEDLY the INVENTOR of CHLORODYNE, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to.—See *The Times*, July 13th, 1864.

DIARRHŒA, DYSENTERY. GENERAL BOARD of HEALTH, London, REPORT that it ACTS as a CHARM, one dose generally sufficient. Dr. GIBBON, Army Medical Staff, Calcutta, states: "2 DOSES COMPLETELY CURED ME of DIARRHŒA."

From SYMES & Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Simla. *Jan.* 5, 1880.

To J. T. DAVENPORT, London.

DEAR SIR,—We congratulate you upon the widespread reputation this justly-esteemed medicine has earned for itself all over the East. As a remedy of general utility, we much question whether a better is imported, and we shall be glad to hear of its finding a place in every Anglo-Indian home. The other brands, we are happy to say, are now relegated to the native bazaars, and, judging from their sale, we fancy their sojourn there will be but evanescent. We could multiply instances *ad infinitum* of the extraordinary efficacy of DR. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE in Diarrhœa and Dysentery, Spasms, Cramps, Neuralgia the Vomiting of Pregnancy, and as a general sedative, that have occurred under our personal observation during many years. In Choleraic Diarrhœa, and even in the more terrible forms of Cholera itself, we have witnessed its surprisingly controlling power. We have never used any other form of this medicine than Collis Browne's, from a firm conviction that it is decidedly the best, and also from a sense of duty we owe to the profession and the public, as we are of opinion that the substitution of any other than Collis Browne's is a deliberate breach of faith on the part of the chemist to prescriber and patient alike.—We are, Sir, faithfully yours, SYMES & CO., *Members of the Pharm. Society of Great Britain, His Excellency the Viceroy's Chemists.*

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE is the TRUE PALLIATIVE in NEURALGIA, GOUT, CANCER, TOOTHACHE, RHEUMATISM.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE is a liquid medicine which assuages PAIN of EVERY KIND, affords a calm, refreshing sleep WITHOUT HEADACHE, and INVIGORATES the nervous system when exhausted.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE rapidly cuts short all attacks of EPILEPSY, SPASMS, COLIC, PALPITATION, HYSTERIA.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.—The IMMENSE SALE of this REMEDY has given rise to many UNSCRUPULOUS IMITATIONS. Be careful to observe Trade Mark. Of all Chemists. 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d.

SOLE MANUFACTURER, J. T. DAVENPORT, 33 Gt. Russell St., W.C.

Towle's Pennyroyal and Steel Pills FOR FEMALES

Quickly correct all irregularities, remove all obstructions, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex.

Boxes, **1/1½ & 2/9** (the latter size contains three times the quantity). of all Chemists, or will be sent anywhere on receipt of **15** or **34** stamps by the maker, E. T. TOWLE, Chemist, NOTTINGHAM.

Beware of imitations injurious and worthless

GIVEN AWAY!

REVULCANISED GOLD MEDAL RUBBER STAMPS.



Your Name, your Monogram, bottle of Endorsing Ink, two Pads, Box, and Brush for **9d.**, post free; with Marking Ink or Pencil, **1/3**. Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, **6d.** Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, **9d.** Watch Case, beautifully chased, with Name and Address Stamp, **1s.**; and every other description of Rubber Stamp half-price. Send for List. Agents wanted. Address to **Crystal Palace (John Bond's Daughter's) Gold Medal Marking Ink Works, 75, Southgate Road, London, N.**





CAUTION.—The Original and Genuine Ink Label has the trade mark, "CRYSTAL PALACE."

OLD MEDAL, NEW ZEALAND, 1882.



EXPORT AGENT—J. T. MORTON, LONDON.

GOLD MEDAL, NEW ZEALAND, 1882.

SYMINGTON'S EGYPTIAN FOOD.

This valuable Food contains as much nutriment as meat.

Used at SMEDLEY'S, MATLOCK, and all the leading Hydropathic Establishments.

FOR INVALIDS AND DELICATE CHILDREN.

MOST EASILY DIGESTED.

Sold in Tins, 1s. per lb., by all Grocers and Chemists.

MANUFACTORY:

Bowden Steam Mills, Market Harborough.

Ask your Grocer for

Crosse & Blackwell's

FRESH FRUIT JAMS & JELLIES,

which are made from Freshly Gathered Fruits and Refined Sugar.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, LIMITED.

SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

SULPHOLINE LOTION

SHILLING BOTTLES.

A Spotless Skin. A Beautiful Complexion.

PEPPER'S TONIC

QUININE AND IRON

2s. 6d. Bottles. Sold Everywhere

GIVES
Great Bodily Strength
Great Nerve Strength!
Great Mental Strength!
Great Digestive Strength!

Promotes Appetite. Cures Dyspepsia, Hysteria, Nervous Complaints, General Debility.

LIEBIG "COMPANY'S" EXTRACT OF BEEF

Is the finest Meat flavouring Stock for Soups, Sauces, Made Dishes, &c.

J. Liebig

Genuine only with **Blue Signature** across the Label.

Sole Manufactory: FRAY BENTOS, SOUTH AMERICA.

The Company's NEW COOKERY BOOK sent free on application to

LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT COMPANY, LIMITED,

9, Fenchurch Avenue, London, E.C.

F. M. EVANS & CO., LIMITED CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

RWICK'S BAKING POWDER. The best that money can buy.

Third Series

NOVEMBER, 1894.

CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED October 6, 13, 20, and 27.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

NOV 5 1894

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 70.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Prisoners of Silence. A Serial Story 313, 337, 361,	385
The Flight of Man	318
Barrington's Marriage. A Complete Story	323
The Industrial Developement of Electricity	328
Nocturnal Lights	342
A New Food-Material	346
October. A Poem	348
The Wizard's Cross. A Complete Story	348
Some Poetic Absurdities ...	354
Bewitched. A Story in Eight Parts 332, 355,	379
An Autumn Morning	366
Some more Traditions of the Elders	369
War among the Fairies. A Complete Story	372
"Tuer le Mandarin"	377
Tanjore	390
Folk-Lore of Palestine ...	394
A Chat about Laughter ...	397
A Sensitive Plant. A Complete Story	400

Price NINEPENCE.

1894. LONDON 12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C. Nos. 301 to 304

RIDGWAYS' TEAS. PERFECTION OF QUALITY & VALUE. KING WILLIAM ST., CITY, & BRANCHES. Also AGENCIES IN MOST LARGE TOWNS.

ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS.

Direct from the largest Firm of Costume Manufacturers in the World, at Less than Half Ordinary Prices,

A LADY'S POPULAR SUIT for 15/-

Made in the John Noble Cheviot Serge (Navy Blue or Black); also in Grey or Drab Homespun Mixtures, and in Navy or Drab Twill Drill. Each suit consists of fashionable Open Coat and improved Bell Skirt, both finished with special quality Silk Cord.

Packed in box and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

THE JOHN NOBLE HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES, consisting of wide Bell Skirt and improved Blouse Bodice, well made and finished, trimmed Russia Braid, are supplied in the John Noble Cheviot Serge for 10/6 complete. Carriage 9d. extra. **10/6**

KNOCKABOUT FROCKS for GIRLS.

Lengths	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45 inches.
Price	1/6	2/-	2/6	3/-	3/6	4/-	4/6	5/-	5/6 each.

Postage 4½d. extra. Lengths stated are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt.

Write for Patterns and Illustrated "Book of the Serge," sent Post Free by

JOHN NOBLE, LTD., The Warehouse, 11, Piccadilly, **MANCHESTER.**



BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH AND WASHING GLOVE.

Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion. Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED Rubber **Bath and Flesh Brushes,** price **5s.** each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON; Ardwick, Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BOILING WATER OR MILK.

A BOON TO LADIES.

COLLINS' MARVELLOUS FEMALE REMEDY.

Mr. COLLINS (who was 30 years a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England) will forward, free of Charge, full PARTICULARS of a REMEDY, which during an extensive practice, both at home and in the Colonies, he has never known to fail in the most OBSTINATE CASES of OBSTRUCTION and IRREGULARITIES. Send addressed envelope for full particulars, and waste no more time and money on useless Pills and so-called Remedies, etc., which, in the majority of cases, are nothing but PURGATIVES, and cause SICKNESS, PROSTRATION, and PAIN, without having the desired effect. Letters to be addressed:

D. COLLINS,
Gothic House, 9, Erskine Street,
Liverpool.

NO HOME COMPLETE OR SAFE WITHOUT.

Slung in all W.C. flush cisterns.

THE NEW DEODORISER.

Scentless, harmless, universal, perfect.

6d. "CONDITAS" 6d.

Free by Post. (A POWDER.) *Free by Post.*

PURIFIES tainted air, water, fish, meat, game, butter, poultry, cisterns, closets, drains, sewers, utensils, plants, animals, birds; grand for bath, toilet, mouth-wash, gargle, and breath drink. Perfect hygiene at last for everybody all the year round automatically washing and purifying.

Of all Stationers and Ironmongers.

163, BATTERSEA RISE, LONDON.

LOVELY HAIR.

Dr. HORN'S "ACESMA" quickly restores the colour to grey, faded, or bleached hair. Does not stain the skin. 2/9 and 5/- per bottle, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "GERMANIA HAIR TONIC" for thin or falling hair. Promotes luxuriant growth. Very cleansing. Non-greasy. 2/9 and 5/-, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "HAIR SOLVENT." A liquid for destroying superfluous hair. Leaves no mark. Better than Electrolysis. 2/9 and 5/- per bottle, post free.

Dr. HORN'S SKIN FOOD for the COMPLEXION. A cure for wrinkles, roughness, irritation, and all blemishes of the skin. Price 2/9, 5/-, and 10/-, post free.

Dr. HORN'S "ABEATA LOTION" for Bald Patches. Cases of six and eight years' baldness successfully treated. 2/9 and 5/-, post free of Chemists and Perfumers, or of Sole Manufacturers,

Cassie & Co, Chemists, 49, Newgate St., E.C.

Read Dr. Horn's Treatise, "The Human Hair," post free, 6d.



Hair 5 feet 2 inches long.

Don't Cough—just use

They at once check the cough and remove the cause—without any after effect.

The Unrivalled Remedy

One gives relief they *will* cure, and they *will not* injure your health.

Keating's Lozenges

SOLD IN TINS 13½ EACH

HARVARD COLLEGE
NOV 5 1894
LIBRARY.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 301.—Third Series. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1894. Price Twopence.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

A reign of terror dominated high and low alike, and the dictator was a woman's temper. A fierce restlessness seemed to possess Mrs. Vallotson, driving her into an incessant, almost defiant, activity. And some jar or strain upon her nerves seemed so to operate, that all her energy, to whatever end directed, flowed in a channel of unending fault-finding. Hard, unyielding, and domineering as she was invariably, no one in Dr. Vallotson's house had ever experienced such treatment at her hands as they met with now. Her temper seemed almost beyond her control. Her asperity and irritability were only a shade less to be deprecated than the violent anger into which she would break on the slightest provocation—sometimes on no provocation whatever. Careful manager and house-proud woman as she was, her rule was too strong and too capable to involve, under ordinary circumstances, that incessant nagging preoccupation which those qualities sometimes carry with them. But now her hand was heavy on the domestic arrangements from morning to night, and the servants were consumed with nervous terror. Constance alone was ever spared, and her mother encouraged her visits in the town and her own occupations restlessly, and almost harshly. For Dr. Vallotson there was no mercy. Nothing he did, and nothing he said, found favour in his wife's eyes during these days. He went softly in his wife's presence, compensating himself by a double measure of pompous self-assertion and ill-temper in her absence.

But for North Branston was the hottest of the fire. The antipathy which haunted their relations seemed to stand out in bitter relief, and at the same time to have somewhat changed its character; there was something singularly impersonal about it. There were times during the fortnight that followed their meeting at Hatherleigh Grange, when her tone to him became such that even her husband would interpose feebly and timidly on the younger man's behalf; times when North Branston would rise and leave the room abruptly, white to the very lips.

Nearly a fortnight had passed. A morning during which the restless acerbity of Mrs. Vallotson's temper had been even more pronounced than usual, had worn itself away, and Mrs. Vallotson was alone in the drawing-room. Her solitude was of her own creating. She had peremptorily insisted on Constance's acceptance of a casual invitation to lunch in the town. And she was seated at her writing-table, adding up tradesmen's books with a fierce keenness of expression which was strangely disproportionate to her occupation.

The door opened, and she lifted her head and turned round sharply.

It was Dr. Vallotson who stood upon the threshold, and his appearance as he hesitated there, holding on to the door-handle, presented a mixture of uneasy deprecation and irrepressible self-importance. His figure was drawn up to rather more than his natural height, his face was pink with excitement; but his lips were pursed up, and his eyes sought his wife's face with involuntary uncertainty. He held a letter in his hand.

"My dear," he began ingratiatingly. "Adelaide, my love, I should not wish

to disturb you, but something of so really—really——" he hesitated and coughed as though unable to decide upon the word—— "really remarkable a nature has occurred that I should like you to hear of it."

Mrs. Vallotson laid down her pen and turned further round in her chair, thus facing her husband.

"What is it?" she said harshly.

"A groom came over from Hatherleigh Grange this morning—you may have seen the man, my dear?"

"Yes!"

"Exactly! He brought a letter from Sir William Karslake to me. I will not say, Adelaide, that its contents surprised me. After all, they point to a very natural feeling on Sir William's part. But they were wholly unexpected. He expresses his desire to be attended for the future by me, and not by Branston."

Dr. Vallotson was standing on the hearth-rug by this time, his hands behind his back, his every muscle absolutely stiff with pompous self-importance, and a moment's dead silence followed.

Mrs. Vallotson was staring at the carpet.

"To be attended for the future by you and not by——" She had spoken in a harsh, mechanical voice, and she stopped abruptly.

"By me, my dear! Yes! You may like to see Sir William's letter, perhaps? Very gracefully put, very! I brought it in on purpose, thinking that you might like to look at it."

He handed her, as he spoke, the letter he held. His wife opened it, and read it in silence.

It was very brief, though it was worded with perfect courtesy, and it was very cold. It conveyed to Dr. Vallotson the writer's feeling that he would prefer to be attended, now that Dr. Vallotson himself was happily recovered, by the senior partner of the firm, as being an older man, and in some measure his—the writer's—contemporary. It expressed the writer's sense of the skill and attention shown him by the junior partner, Dr. Branston, during his late illness; and it was signed "William Archibald Karslake."

"Very civil, my dear, is it not? And very natural, of course—very natural indeed!"

Dr. Vallotson had been fidgeting restlessly for some seconds. Time enough had elapsed for the mastering of the brief sentences several times over, and Mrs. Vallotson had neither moved nor spoken. Her eyes were still fixed upon the paper in her hand. She did not lift them now as she answered:

"Yes!"

"It is not quite the customary thing to do—not in a partnership of this kind. I am well aware that Branston is far from considering himself my junior! But you see, Sir William has evidently considered him as such—very naturally, indeed! I assure you, Adelaide, when I read the letter, my first feeling was one of annoyance—very serious annoyance indeed. I feared that Branston must have made some mistake in the treatment, or must have shown himself inattentive in some way to offend Sir William. And no doubt, no doubt, there is some little personal dissatisfaction mixed up with it. I've told Branston again and again how greatly his manner is against him, and I've pointed out the fact once more in this connection."

"Does North know?"

Mrs. Vallotson lifted her head suddenly as she spoke.

"Yes, my dear, yes. He happened to be in my room when the note came, and I handed it to him at once."

"What did he say?"

Dr. Vallotson shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands with lofty reprobation.

"A little less indifference to people's opinion would greatly improve Branston, Adelaide!" he said pompously. "His self-conceit is a most unfortunate trait. He said nothing."

"Nothing?"

"He handed me back the note in silence—actually in silence. I felt it incumbent upon me, I need not tell you, to ask him if there was any explanation other than the reason given in the letter. And thereupon he said in that cold-blooded, incomprehensible way of his, that no other explanation seemed necessary! Quite true, of course! Quite true. But I cannot say he said it pleasantly. Thank you, my dear."

Dr. Vallotson held out his hand, as he spoke the last words, to reclaim Sir William Karslake's letter. His wife gave it him without a word, and a rather singular little silence ensued. Dr. Vallotson evidently expected some comment; but none was forthcoming. His lips were just parting to present some other aspect of the subject when the luncheon bell rang, and Mrs. Vallotson rose suddenly.

"There is the bell," she said.

Mrs. Vallotson went through the after-

noon that followed in a taciturn fashion, marked by a grim strength of self-control which was the very antithesis of the fierce restlessness on which it followed. The servants reported to one another in breathless tones that their mistress seemed to be "settling down." And Constance, who spent the afternoon paying calls with her mother, was aware of a decidedly desirable change in the atmosphere. "Elderly people were so often distressingly uncertain in their temper," she had told herself more than once lately. She also became aware—but very vaguely, since the smallest modicum of her attention alone was available for other than her own private and public-spirited plans—of a rather singular expression upon her mother's face, which made her look, as the girl said to herself, "ridiculously defiant."

"Is there anything the matter, mother?" she said at last.

The mother and daughter had just come upstairs together on reaching home, and Mrs. Vallotson turned to her daughter abruptly.

"No," she said. "Of course not. What should be the matter, child?" And then she went on composedly to her own room.

It was perhaps an hour later when Mrs. Vallotson came out of her room, ready for dinner, and went downstairs. She went along the passage to North Branston's room, and opened the door a few inches.

"North," she said. "Are you there? I want to speak to you."

There was a moment's pause, and then North Branston's voice answered her.

"Come in," it said.

She pushed open the door and entered the room. North had been in the act of replacing a pile of books on the shelves facing the door, and he stood where he was to receive her. He was looking harassed and worn, and indescribably dark and cynical.

"Well?" he said.

It was a trivial matter, as it appeared, connected with the health of one of the servants; a matter which she usually referred to her husband. North Branston answered her questions, and having disposed of the subject he waited, evidently expecting her to go.

But Mrs. Vallotson did not go. She came a little further into the room, resting one hand on the back of a chair, and looked at him.

"What is this I hear about you and Sir William Karslake?" she said. The words came abruptly, almost as though they were uttered under some sort of compulsion.

North Branston's face grew darker.

"I conclude that you have heard that he has dismissed me in favour of Dr. Vallotson," he said, with curt indifference.

"Have you any idea as to the reason?"

He turned to the bookcase and began to put away the books he held.

"I have not troubled to consider the question."

Mrs. Vallotson watched him for a moment; her eyes were riveted on him, but they seemed to see not North Branston, but something beyond him in which his personality was merged.

"You are not surprised!" she said. "Had you any reason to expect—this? You have seen Sir William Karslake, I suppose, since the afternoon when I called at Hatherleigh? Did he give you any reason to think that he disliked you?"

North Branston pursued his occupation deliberately and without pause.

"I am not surprised," he said, "because it is not worth while to be surprised. I saw Sir William Karslake three days ago, but he did not honour me with the confidence you suggest."

He placed the last book on the shelf and turned towards her. His face was set into worse lines than had ever marred it before.

"If there is nothing more you want to say, Adelaide," he said, "I have some writing to do before dinner."

She looked at him a moment more, and then she turned away.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Oh, William, what a fluke! I call that really maddening of you. What am I to do now, I should like to know?"

The billiard-room at Hatherleigh Grange was one of the pleasantest rooms in the house; it was comfortable, it was luxurious, and all its decorations and appointments harmonised, in a certain depth of colour and solidity of outline, with the masculine idea which it implied. Lady Karslake, resting both hands on her cue and contemplating the billiard-table with a half-laughing, half-reflective wrinkling of her brows, gave an irresistibly delightful note of contrast to the picture presented. She stood for a moment musing, her grey eyes brightening; then she threw herself swiftly

into position, every graceful line of her figure thrown into relief, and extricated herself from her difficulties by an astonishingly daring and skilful stroke.

She turned to her husband with a gay gesture of triumph.

"There," she said. "I shall beat you after all. Wasn't that good?"

Sir William Karslake was looking rather worn, and the lines about his nose and eyes seemed to be more deeply graven than usual. He had watched her stroke with a rather preoccupied look in his cold eyes. But he transferred his attention to her with courteous completeness as he answered:

"Admirable! It was a thing that only a woman would have attempted."

There was a little satirical twist about his mouth as he spoke; and in his eyes, as he looked at her, there was a touch of satirical speculation. She turned away to the table with a quick, wilful gesture of laughing repudiation and defiance, and followed up her stroke with another as brilliant.

"My game!" she cried lightly, as she straightened her slender figure. "Aha, my friend, you see it's not so bad a thing to be a woman."

She gave him her cue, smiling derisively into his face as she did so, strolled up to the fireplace and subsided into her favourite chair.

"It hasn't tired you, I hope, William?" she said over her shoulder. The friendly indifference with which she spoke was curiously typical of her whole tone towards her husband; a tone of easy good-fellowship which neither gave nor desired anything beyond the mutual give and take of everyday companionship.

Her husband came towards her with a gesture of negation.

"Not in the least," he said, with rather chill courtesy.

Sir William Karslake had a rooted dislike, which he evinced tacitly but unmistakeably, to any reference on his wife's part to the subject of his health.

He went up to a little table on which stood a tray with glasses, decanters, and aërated waters, mixed some whisky and seltzer-water, and then seated himself in a chair on the other side of the hearth to that which his wife occupied, and drew out his cigarette case.

"Where did you call this afternoon?" he said.

Lady Karslake stretched out one little pointed toe towards the fire and clasped her hands behind her head. She was looking very fresh and full of life; rather as though it were the beginning than the end of the day. She was, indeed, a woman with whom—for all her dainty womanliness—it was impossible to associate any idea of physical weakness or fatigue. Like a finely-tempered instrument, her delicate organisation seemed too admirably proportioned for fragility.

"This afternoon?" she said. "Oh, I went to the Howards at Sutton and the Howards at Sutton-Basing, and I did the Llanyons. And nothing of the faintest interest was done or said by any of those good people. Then I came home through Alnchester and did Mrs. Daintree!"—Mrs. Daintree was the Dean's wife. "William"—a mischievous laugh had come into Lady Karslake's voice, and her eyes were dancing—"I am so glad you took this place. Alnchester simply delights me!"

"Really?" responded her husband. "I am charmed to hear it."

"I've no doubt," she went on, with a laugh, "that it will pall upon me after a time—I don't attempt to disguise that fact from myself. But at present I ask nothing more, when I need a little winding up, than to be allowed to pay a call in Alnchester. I have met only one inhabitant of Alnchester who is not convinced that Alnchester is the one truly habitable spot upon the earth's surface; that all the ways and works of that spot are the only right ways and works for all reasonable human beings, and that he himself is somehow or other a cynosure for all eyes—outside Alnchester—as being that pattern being, an Alnchester man. And oh dear me!" she added, with a low peal of laughter, "how sorry I am for that solitary inhabitant!"

"Do I know him?" said Sir William absently.

His wife turned and looked at him with little smiles coming and going about her mouth and eyes.

"That is a question which shows how little you have seen of Alnchester!" she remarked. "Yes, you do know him. The miserable being is Dr. Branston. By-the-bye, I went round by the place they're turning into this Cottage Hospital every one talks so much about. I told him I should go and look at it. Rather a nice old place."

She paused. Sir William Karslake took his cigarette rather abruptly from between

his lips, laid it in his ash-tray, and leaned back in his chair.

"I must confess," he said, "that your penetration surprises me. I have discovered nothing in Branston which differentiates him from his fellow-townsmen!" His slow, well-bred voice was very dry, and a trifle sarcastic.

His wife glanced at him with a quick change in her expression. Then she lifted her eyebrows with a little ironical movement and said carelessly:

"Then I'm afraid I can't congratulate you! My dear William, the unfortunate man has that which would differentiate him from nine-tenths of his fellow-men anywhere—brains! Good Heavens!" her face changed again, and she laughed. "It's no wonder he is such a grim personage! He might as well live on a desert island, for all the sympathy that exists between himself and the people among whom he lives. Indeed"—she paused reflectively—"I think he would rather live on a desert island than in Alnchester! I was sorry for him from the first, but since I've seen his sister—oh, poor wretch, I consider his fate tragic! William, I assure you the recollection of that petrifying woman sometimes makes me laugh when I'm all by myself. You're being very extravagant with your cigarettes, William!"

Regardless of the not half-smoked cigarette which lay at his hand, her husband had opened his cigarette case again and was slowly and deliberately lighting a second. He followed the direction of her eyes as she nodded smilingly towards the first, but he did not seem to see it, and he ignored her words.

"Does it?" he said drily. "You found her petrifying?"

"Petrifying! You had more of her than I did! What did you find her? I concluded that it was her gorgon-like presence that knocked you up for the evening after. By-the-bye, when is Dr. Branston coming here again? I was out when he came the other day, which was very stupid of him!"

Sir William Karslake did not move. Not even a muscle of his face stirred. He was holding his cigarette between his fingers, and he said quietly:

"He is not coming again."

His wife glanced round at him quickly. Then she placidly drew in the little shoe which was getting too hot.

"Ah," she said, "that means you are out of the doctor's hands! Good news, you poor thing! But couldn't you keep Dr. Branston in attendance? He is interesting. I suppose we could hardly ask him to dinner without his belongings!"

"Hardly," assented her husband, with a certain ironical blandness of tone. He leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs.

"I have not quite conveyed the situation to you," he said, with rather elaborately deferential consideration. "I have written to Dr. Vallotson to-day to express my wish that he will attend me himself for the future. I prefer to have an older man than your friend Branston."

"You have written—William!"

Lady Karslake had lifted herself from her idle, reclining attitude with one swift, supple movement, and had turned so as to face her husband, one hand resting on the back of her chair, her eyes open to their fullest extent, incredulity and amazement written on every line of her face. He made a slight gesture as in corroboration, and a little flush as of remonstrance swept into her cheeks.

"But what — what an extraordinary thing!" she said impetuously. "What a short-sighted thing! Dr. Branston has done wonders for you, hasn't he? The nurses said so."

Sir William Karslake just shrugged his shoulders; he knocked the ash from the end of his cigarette.

"He is clever, yes," he said drily. Then he turned slowly and fixed his eyes on his wife's face.

A strong indignation had flashed into her eyes, and her colour was coming and going almost as she breathed.

"I don't understand it!" she exclaimed impulsively. "After all the attention he has given, and all his interest—it seems so—so horribly ungrateful!" She paused, her brows contracted as if over a problem eminently distasteful and by no means to be solved. "You can't mean that you prefer that old humbug," she said. "You must have some better reason than that. What is it, William?"

There was a moment's silence. Sir William's face was perfectly composed, perfectly courteous, but there was a singular calculation in his cold eyes, fixed upon her face with an indescribable little smile in them. He looked like a man who, finding himself in something of a predicament, becomes aware of a means of self-extrication which appeals to a sarcastic sense of humour, and to a certain cold-blooded delight in cruel experiment which

is not unusual in a man of Sir William Karslake's type. At last he spoke, still watching his wife.

"Perhaps I have considered it wiser to dispense with Dr. Branston's services," he said.

"Wiser!" The exclamation was full of impatient incomprehension, and Lady Karslake's hand tapped the back of the chair impulsively as she uttered it. "My dear William, I suppose you do consider it wiser, or you wouldn't do such an extraordinary and ungracious thing. But why is it wiser? That is what I want to know. Why? Why? Why?"

The monosyllable was emphasized, each time it was spoken, by the slender, indignant hand on the chair, and the smile in her husband's eyes spread to the lines about his nose with very unpleasant effect.

"There are many things in this life," he said suavely, "that are better left unexpressed. Pardon my suggesting to you that if you realised the vehemence of your partisanship at this moment, you would hardly need to ask the question."

With a swift, sudden movement, Lady Karslake's brows contracted as though the drift of his words eluded her. Then, gradually, she seemed to understand him.

The hand upon the back of the chair clenched so fiercely that the rings must have cut into the delicate flesh. The flushed, spirited, protesting face paled to the lips, all play of expression dying on the instant into stillness, in one flash of indescribable amazement and measureless scorn. Her eyes dilated, and then contracted until they shone like two stars.

Fully a moment elapsed, and then Lady Karslake moved and spoke. She rose to her feet, and stood looking down upon her husband as he slowly lifted his cigarette to his lips.

"How dared you?" she said, in a low, vibrating voice.

And then she turned and left the room without another word.

THE FLIGHT OF MAN.

THE longing for the wings of a dove in order to fly away and be—if not at rest, at all events in some other place—was imprinted in the human breast long before the days of the Psalmist; and it remains there to explain the persistent efforts which have been made, from age to age and from century to century, to find the means of aërial locomotion. Long before David, indeed, the ingenious Dædalus devised for himself and for his son, Icarus, a serviceable pair of wings. At least, they were serviceable up to a certain point, and if Icarus came to grief with his pair, that was more his fault than that of the machinery. He was, like many people even unto this day, too ambitious, and would fly so near the sun that he singed his wings, and fell incontinently into the sea. Father Dædalus, more cautious, kept out of the sun-rays, and so managed to fly safely from Crete to Sicily. But, alas! he omitted to leave for the benefit of posterity the specification of his invention. There were no Patent Offices in those days.

Then Iris also possessed the secret, or a secret, of flying, but she kept it to herself, or buried it within the gorgeous canopy of the rainbow. From Iris to Roger Bacon is a long jump, but Roger, it may be remembered, predicted that the lost art of flying would be one day recovered, and it is recorded that in, or soon after, his time children were trained in the use of wings as in the use of the globes. Whether they ever attained anything more graceful and rapid than the skimming motion of half-fledged sparrows, we are not aware.

In the eighteenth century there was a Frenchman, named Besnier, who built for himself a pair of wings wherewith he could waft himself across the surface of broad rivers, without actually rising into flight. But he thought he could fly, as have thought a good many other ingenious mechanicians. Yet although for ages man has been trying to rival the bird, he has never successfully accomplished anything more remarkable in the way of aërial navigation than the balloon. This is an ingenious but a cumbrous and uncertain machine, and its great defect is the lack of the power of propulsion. Of what use to float in the air if you cannot wing yourself to where you would go? In short, ballooning is not flying, but flotation—which is a very different thing.

It is a good long time since old Bishop Wilkins predicted that the day would come when men will call as unconcernedly for their wings as they now do for their boots, but the day has not come yet. We still dream of the delights of that Vril-force which made life so enjoyable among Lytton's Gyei, and still long for that wonderful Pyrogen of Mortimer Collins's Martian friends. By the way, does anybody nowadays read those delightful books—"The Coming Race" and "Transmigration"?

Societies for the Promotion of Physical Flight have a more direct and practical appeal to our sympathies than have Societies for the Promotion of Psychical Research. Man longs to fly and will continue to long until he has flown—either to the moon, or to a broken neck. To mount up into the air as the eagles is the irrepressible longing which lies at the foundation of Aeronautical Science.

As to the flight of the witches of old, they, of course, were independent of either wings or gas-bags. All they wanted was a broomstick, and a little ointment to grease the air with. Some said that the ointment was made out of the fat of disinterred babes, but that is a detail. The point is the flying.

> As men in sleep, though motionless they lie,
> Fledg'd by a dream, believe they mount and fly;
> So witches some enchanted wand bestride,
> And think they through the airy regions ride.

Thus the sceptical Oldham—and perhaps he was right. "Fledg'd by a dream," anyhow, is good, and has found frequent illustration in the efforts of artificial wing-makers.

In 1825, that extraordinary madcap who fancied himself an Adonis, and who used to amuse the frequenters of Vauxhall by his vanities and absurdities — to wit, Joseph Leeming, alias "The Aërial"—tried to increase his notoriety by flight, or rather by trying to fly. He advertised that he had hit upon a plan by which he could mount up into the air on equal terms with the rooks and magpies, and he proposed with his patent wings to fly from the cliffs of Dover across to Calais, and even to the gates of Paris, in spite of "douaniers" and passports. But after inspecting the cliffs, "The Aërial" deemed it prudent to postpone the journey "sine die."

Perhaps some one had meanwhile called his attention to a note in "The Gentleman's Magazine," which ran thus: "On the evening of Friday, the first of October, 1736, during the performance of an entertainment called 'Dr. Faustus,' at Covent Garden Theatre, one James Todd, who represented the Miller's man, fell from the upper stage in a flying-machine by the breaking of the wires. He fractured his skull, and died miserably; three others were much hurt, but recovered. Some of the audience swooned, and the whole were in great confusion upon this sad accident."

In the year 1709 a Brazilian priest called the attention of the King of Portugal to a flying-machine which he had invented, and which is thus described in a newspaper of the time. "Father Bartholomew Laurent says that he has found out an Invention by the help of which one may more speedily travel through the Air than any other way either by sea or land, so that one may go two hundred miles in twenty-four Hours: send orders and Conclusions of Councils to Generals in a manner as soon as they are determined in private Cabinets, and that Merchants may have their merchandise and send letters and packets more conveniently. Places besieged may be supplied with necessaries and succours. Moreover we may transport out of such places what we please and the enemy cannot hinder it"—and so on. Then it is pointed out that many misfortunes and shipwrecks have happened for want of maps, but that by this invention the earth would now be accurately mapped, wherefore a patent and exclusive right of use and to grant licenses for use, are claimed by the inventor.

This was the specification of the invention, attached to a very quaint drawing representing something like a cross between a bird and a dish-cover. (1) Sails, "wherewith the air is to be divided, which turn as they are directed." (2) Rudder, "to govern the ship that she may not run at random." (3) A concave hull or body, "which is formed at both ends scollopwise; in the concavity of each is a pair of bellows which must be blown when there is no wind." (4) Two wings, "which keep the ship upright." (5) A globe at each end, being "the globes of Heaven and Earth containing in them attractive virtues; they are of metal, and serve for a cover to two loadstones placed in them upon pedestals to draw the ship after them, the body of which is of thin iron plates, covered with straw mats for convenience of ten or eleven men besides the Artist." (6) A cover or awning of iron-wire, "on which are fastened a good number of large amber beads, which by a secret operation will help to keep the ship afloat, and by the sun's heat the aforesaid mats that line the ship will be drawn towards the amber beads."

There was also an arrangement of pulleys and ropes to work the sails, and in the centre of the machine—an engraving of which is reproduced in "The Book of Days"—is represented the artist, "who by the help of the celestial globe, a sea map and compass, takes the height of the sun, thereby to find out the spot of land over which they are on the globe of the Earth."

Perhaps this flying-ship was like "the

bird that never flew" of the armorial bearings of Glasgow, but at any rate we are unable to say what success attended Father Bartholomew Laurent's enterprise. It was more of a ship than a bird, however, and much more complicated than the device of the Abbot of Tungland in the reign of James the Fourth of Scotland, of whom Bishop Wesley quaintly tells: "This Abbott tuik in hand to flie with wingis, and to be in France befoir the Ambassadouris; and to that effect he causet mak ane pair of wingis of fedderis quhilkis beand fastenit upon him, he flew off the Castell wall of Stirling, but shortlie he fell to the ground and brak his thee-bane. But the wyt (blame) thairof he ascrybit to that thair was sum hen's fedderis in the wingis, quhilk yamit and covet the midding and not the skyes."

This same Abbot of Tungland, by the way, was an Italian, and he "causet the King believe that he by multiplyinge and uthers his inventions wold make fine golde of uther metall, quhilk science he callit the quintassence, whereupon the King maid greet cost but all in vaine"—from which we may infer that the experience of King James the Fourth with the Italian was very much like that of Sir Arthur Wardour with Herman Dousterswivel in "The Antiquary."

In "The Book of Days" it is further recorded that in 1777, a French convict at Paris made himself a whirl of feathers "curiously interlaced, and extending gradually at suitable distances in a horizontal direction from his feet to his neck." Thus clad, he fluttered down from a height of seventy feet, and "fell on his feet uninjured in the presence of an immense body of spectators." He experienced no pain, but complained of a feeling of sea-sickness!

One does not hear so much nowadays of the efforts at flight of the Aeronautical Society which a few years ago bent so many energies on the solution of the problem. It is now quite sixteen years since an American gentleman, Professor Ritchell, exhibited at Hartford, Connecticut, a flying-machine which was the fruit of many years' study and experiment. From a memorandum we made at the time we find it thus described. "The lifting power is obtained from a horizontal cylinder of gossamer cloth — fine linen coated with india-rubber — twenty-five feet long by thirteen feet in diameter, weighing only sixty-six pounds. A network of broad worsted bands encloses the cylinder, and is connected to a strong brass tube one and a half inches in diameter and twenty-three feet long, to which the flying machine proper is attached. The latter consists of an arrangement of hollow brass rods, very light and strong, which carries the gearing and a four-bladed fan or screw propeller, which can be rotated at the rate of two thousand revolutions per minute. This propeller is twenty-four inches in diameter, and is worked by treadles from a small seat, and attached to the same gearing is a vertical fan twenty-two inches in diameter."

The whole machine was said to weigh only a hundredweight. The cylinder was filled with hydrogen gas, which made the machine so floatable that a puff would send it bounding in the air. On the day of exhibition the inventor rose with it to a height of two hundred and fifty feet, and sailed over the Connecticut River, and worked his way back, in a series of tacks against the wind, by means of the propeller. What became of this invention we do not know, as we heard no more about it after the reported trials, which were in June, 1878. But after all, Professor Ritchell's device was only an elaboration of the balloon. It was not flight by the aid of wings.

Now to float about attached to a bag of gas is not to realise the delicious motion of fleet-winged Ariel or of ubiquitous Puck. It even falls a good deal short of the remarkable properties of George Macdonald's "Light Princess"—who, to be sure, had some difficulty in getting down again when she did soar; but the Princess was as much troubled by the absence, as the balloonists are by the presence, of the force of gravitation.

The late Richard A. Proctor used to say that flying is, after all, a mere mechanical problem which has to be solved, and which will be solved when once the true principles of flight are fully understood. He predicted that in time iron and steam will place it in man's power to outvie the swiftest of our winged creatures—the swallow, the pigeon, and the hawk. And the Duke of Argyll, who expounded "The Reign of Law" in the bird's wing as in other matters, says that there is nothing more mysterious in its action than in that of a man's arm. All you want to know is how it is done—for Nature is just one vast system of contrivance, and "the certainty with which purpose can be accomplished by contrivance is the index and the measure of mental knowledge and resource."

Still, it must be admitted that the purpose of contrivance would be not only to devise an imitation of the action of a bird's wing, but to find some vehicle through which to convey it very much lighter than anything which has yet been produced. In this Professor Ritchell did not succeed, nor did Mr. H. C. Linfield, who in 1883 invented a steam-flyer, which was tried on the railway at West Drayton, and then disappeared from public view, like so many other inventions of the same kind or with the same end in view.

Some years ago a Belgian inventor brought over a flying-machine, raised by a gas-balloon, which he exhibited to the frequenters of the Cremorne Gardens. It went up, sure enough, but it also came down, and so suddenly that the poor inventor was killed in the presence of his own wife. Commenting on this case, in connection with Mr. Maxim's recent invention, Sir Robert Rawlinson says: "The albatross and large gulls of the tropics are, in their flight, the most graceful things in creation, but in storms they are subject to having broken wings. And how is man to build up a machine to fly by mechanical power like an albatross or gull?"

Mr. Maxim, of gun fame, says he has now solved the problem. He does not propose to start from a height, as his predecessors have usually done, and thus to risk breaking his neck by a fall. His machine is built to start from the ground, on the very reasonable hypothesis that if it has not sufficient energy to rise and sustain itself, it certainly can never fall. If, he says, he had taken the first machine he constructed, during his series of experiments, up in a balloon, and dropped it, it would certainly have come down with something like a crash, although not severe enough, perhaps, to kill any one; but instead of doing that, he has kept on experimenting and improving the efficiency of his screws and motors, so that now he has produced a machine which, he claims, can raise itself off the track on which it is laid.

Mr. Maxim's experiments, which were the subject of explanation and comment at the recent meeting of the British Association, have been conducted near Bexley, in Kent, where he laid down a track of about sixteen hundred feet of railroad, and on each side of the railroad an inverted track of strong timber about two feet high. This inverted track was to prevent the machine from rising more than two feet—arms projecting from each side of the vehicle, with flanged wheels, which pressed against the lower side of the timber. Between these two tracks Mr. Maxim has sailed a distance of five hundred feet successfully. The possibility of flight being thus demonstrated, the height and extent of the flight become, one is to suppose, only a question of elaboration and nerve.

The machine is an arrangement of aeroplanes, and is driven by a screw. It is equipped with engines, boiler, fuel, and water, and is constructed to carry three persons.

To attempt to describe the wonderful mechanism of the machinery, and the elaborate ingenuity of the boilers, would involve technicalities unsuitable for these pages. Suffice it that Lord Kelvin, the President of the Royal Society, who has travelled on the machine, has declared that the modes of feeding and working the machinery are "marvels of engineering skill," and that Lord Rayleigh, another eminent scientist, characterises the experiment which he witnessed as "one of the sensations of his life."

When loaded up with water and fuel, and a crew of three men, the machine weighs about eight thousand pounds. Yet with this weight the machine lifted itself, and with a pressure of three hundred and ten pounds per square inch of steam, the screws drove it along through the air—only the safety track preventing it from rising higher—at the rate of forty miles an hour. The idea of the safety track may strike the reader as being analogous to the rope attached to the boy who is being taught to swim. The fact is, we have got to learn not only how to make a flying-machine, but also how to use it when made. If we were all equipped with perfect sets of wings to-morrow, they would be of no advantage to us until we learned how to use them properly.

Apropos of the difficulty of learning how to fly, an American professor has ingeniously suggested that criminals condemned to death should be employed as pioneers in the process of education. "A man convicted of slaughtering his wife, for example, instead of being forced to edify a handful of curious onlookers with the ghastly spectacle of capital punishment, might be permitted first to receive the coaching of some expert in aerodromics; then on the day set for public exhibition, if both machine and aerator go to smash, well and good—the criminal would have to suffer death any way, and the builder of

the machine would feel compensated by the opportunity for testing his device; while if the trial succeeded, the gain to the art of flight may be enormous, and the culprit will come down presumably frightened enough to choose a life of virtue for ever thereafter."

Perhaps—but probably most criminals would prefer the certain "drop" of Jack Ketch to the possible drop from the clouds.

Mr. Maxim's machine was wrecked because the flange-wheels got loose from the safety track, and the thing was thrown to an angle which twisted the axles. It had to be brought to a stand by shutting off the steam, when it dropped quietly on to the turf. "The Times" report of the occurrence may be quoted: "In last week's successful trial, Mr. Maxim started with a pressure of three hundred and ten pounds, which had risen to some three hundred and twenty when he had traversed some five hundred yards. To realise the full meaning of this result it must be remembered that these five hundred yards were run at the rate of forty-five miles an hour, the propellers making some five hundred revolutions a minute. The fuel used was gasoline. The total weight of the machine was about eight thousand pounds, while the engines were giving a lifting power of about ten thousand pounds. There was, therefore, a surplus flotatory power of some two thousand pounds, or in other words, the machine could have flown with something near that amount of extra weight above what it actually carried. It was, of course, this two thousand pounds of surplus lifting power that did all the mischief, by throwing on the controlling axles a strain they had not been designed to bear. After such an experiment few engineers will in future be found willing to deny, as some have in the past, the possibility of constructing an aërial vessel so powerful and yet so light as to be able to propel itself and its crew through the air, together with water and fuel sufficient for a voyage."

Far be it from us, at any rate, to deny the possibility. What we are dubious about is the practicability of the invention. What it has done has been demonstrated, and testified to by Lord Kelvin and other eminent scientists, but what it can do further, or rather what can be done with it, has yet to be seen.

It should be mentioned, however, that Mr. Maxim expressly disclaims the intention of experimenting with a view to evolve a machine for carrying passengers and freight. It will be long, he thinks, before a flying-machine can be so utilised profitably. The navigation of the air he admits to be beset with many dangers—but so also is the manufacture of explosives and the firing of big guns.

No one has yet devised a perfectly safe system of either navigation or warfare. War, at any rate, under the most favourable conditions, is a very dangerous game, but nations are not deterred from going to war by thoughts of torpedoes, torpedo-catchers, smokeless powder, or explosive shells. Now, argues Mr. Maxim, it is shown to be possible to make a machine that will actually fly at a very high velocity, and nothing remains but to learn how to manœuvre it. "In view," he says, "of the decided advantage which a flying-machine would give its possessor over an enemy, I do not think that in case of war European nations would hesitate to employ them even if one-half of the men navigating them were killed. At the present time no difficulty is ever found in getting volunteers to make a torpedo-boat attack upon a man-of-war, something which is infinitely more dangerous than navigating a flying-machine would be, as the latter might be painted black, and make its attack at night, or in a fog, when it would be quite impossible for the enemy to strike back."

And yet, after all, is it not a poor thought that "the first European nation which takes advantage of this new engine of destruction will be able to modify the map of Europe to its own ideas"? Is the dream of centuries to end only in superiority in the art of manslaughter?

Flying-machines, we are told, will be always too expensive to make, and too expensive to manage with engineering, aeronautical—and possibly acrobatical—experts, to be available as means of popular locomotion. In the matter of freight-rates they will never be able to compete with even a monopoly-endowed railway or a subsidised steamboat line. But why, therefore, should they be confined to purposes of warfare?

Steam-yachts and electric launches may be expensive luxuries, but they are common enough, and if a flying-machine can be produced—as is said—capable of flying for a thousand miles at a high speed with the fuel it will have storage for, we must protest against it being utilised only for spying out an enemy's country, and for the promiscuous dropping of dynamite bombs.

There is an old Scotch proverb to the

effect that "Fleying a bird is no' the way to catch it," which one may lay to heart, as well as a new meaning to Wordsworth's lines:

Wings have we—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure; wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood,
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.

BARRINGTON'S MARRIAGE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

DIRECTLY I got home from my winter's stay on the Riviera, Mrs. Danton invited me to a tea-party. She is very fond of these little excitements, which I think the Vicar cordially abominates. At all events, he never appears unless the weather is suitable for the gathering to be in the garden; and then, if he can get a few kindred spirits to join him in a game of bowls, he is quite happy. These entertainments can hardly be dignified by the name of "garden parties," for they are only small informal gatherings; and as we all know one another well, we have many interests in common, and compare notes with much zeal as to the progress of our various undertakings for the well-being of our respective villages. That we talk gossip, I fear "goes without saying"; but on the whole, it is kindly gossip, and shows that we "take an interest" in one another—which to my mind is better than indifference any day. Besides, gossip is not necessarily scandal, and in a country life one is bound to accept the little diversions that come one's way, or stagnate hopelessly. Well, on this fine June afternoon we were sitting in the Vicarage garden on the smooth shady lawn, with the beautiful view of the hills straight before us. The Dantons had their niece, Cherry, staying with them. Everybody liked Cherry; in fact, we looked upon her almost as a native, as she came for a long visit every year. She was the eldest daughter of Mr. Danton's only brother, who died some years ago. Her mother had married again, and Mr. and Mrs. Danton, who have no children of their own, would have liked to adopt Cherry, but her mother wouldn't give her up, though she was willing to lend her for a good time every summer. Cherry was never so happy as when she was staying at the Vicarage; and, as I said before, she was a general favourite. What was she like? Well, I am not good at describing people, but to me she always seemed the prettiest girl I had ever seen. She had big grey eyes, which had a way of making the person she was talking to think his or her conversation must be really thrilling! And the interest was genuine. Cherry really was absorbed in the joys and woes of the individual addressing her, for she possessed in perfection the gift of sympathy, and had the knack of making other people's feelings her own. Mr. Danton found her an invaluable assistant in the parish, for she would listen patiently to the old women's interminable stories, and never minded the gruesome sights so freely displayed to view.

But to return to the Vicarage garden. Pretty Cherry was devoting herself to Mrs. Ansley, a charming old lady with a wonderful flow of talk, of which, on this occasion, I began to feel woefully impatient; for I wanted Cherry to come and post me up in all that had happened in the village and neighbourhood during my unusually long absence. Mrs. Danton was presiding at the tea-table with Harry Ford, old Mrs. Ansley's grandson, as her assistant; and the Vicar was outwardly making himself agreeable to his guests, and inwardly wondering when he could get to his beloved bowls. Suddenly I was startled by an apparition. Oh, no, I don't mean a ghost, but something really quite as unexpected and unaccountable. Through the French window of the drawing-room advanced a strange young man! You don't think that sight astonishing? Then you have never lived in the heart of the country, miles from a railway station. Of course, if one went to the extremity of one's "visiting radius"—eight miles, let us say, east, west, north, or south—one would expect to meet people from the "other side," and would not be surprised at the sight of a stranger; or, at the regular garden parties we all gave during the season, visitors at the various houses would impart some novelty to the gathering. But this was only one of Mrs. Danton's tea-parties; and the young man didn't come in the train of any other guest, but by himself; and he walked through the window to the lawn quite unannounced, just as a resident would do.

"Cherry," I said, when Mrs. Ansley's attention was for a moment diverted from her victim by the stir caused by the new arrival, "Cherry, come here and talk to me. Who on earth is the young man?"

Cherry laughed.

"Why, Mrs. Graham, don't you know? It is Mr. Barrington, the new doctor. You must have heard, surely, that old Dr. Solly

has retired. Well, Mr. Barrington bought the practice, and has been here some months now."

"Of course. How stupid of me!" I exclaimed. "Only somehow I thought the new doctor would be a replica of the old, and never imagined he would take such an attractive form as this. Why, he must be a great acquisition. Just think of having a reserve of a whole unattached man to draw on for dinner-parties! At least, I suppose he is unattached, as he came alone. Don't tell me there is a wife to be invited too!"

"Oh, no," said Cherry, with rather a heightened colour, I fancied. "Mr. Barrington isn't married, and, as you say, he is a great acquisition. He plays and sings, and has been in wonderful request at Penny Readings all round the neighbourhood. Of course they are over now, but you can't think how much pleasanter and more lively they are when Mr. Barrington takes part in them."

At that moment the Vicar came up.

"Mrs. Graham," he said, "let me introduce you to our new doctor, who will do his best to keep you in England next winter. We can't have you always behaving like the swallows, you know!"

"I doubt whether Mrs. Graham will thank me for doing that," laughed Mr. Barrington. "I always find 'Riviera' a very popular prescription with ladies. In fact, I shouldn't mind trying it myself."

"I don't think you would," I said. "The life of a country doctor must be simply awful in the winter! The state of the roads makes getting about a penance even in the daytime; and what it must be at night, I shudder to think!"

"Ah, well," he rejoined, "it is summer now, and we needn't think of the disagreeables until we are obliged. In this weather, visiting patients at a distance is a pleasure; riding and driving are both passions with me. Still, I shall try and get away to a good town practice as soon as I can."

"Now, Mr. Barrington, you mustn't say that," struck in old Mrs. Ansley. "We have got used to you now and can't spare you. Only you really must get married! We do like our doctor to be married; don't we, Mrs. Graham? There was Mr. Green, he wouldn't marry, and the consequence was——" and the old lady was nearly launched on one of her flood tides of recollection, when Mr. Barrington skilfully stemmed the torrent.

"But I can't afford to marry, Mrs. Ansley; I am always telling you that. A country practice like this isn't what one would call lucrative. You are all so disgracefully healthy, except the poor people. They give me work enough, but I feel a brute when the time comes for sending in my little bill, and it is always an even chance whether I get my money."

"But a wife would help you to get along, Doctor," said Mrs. Ansley, gallantly sticking to her guns. "I am sure, to have a housekeeper is a very extravagant method of housekeeping. Now, to marry a nice, pretty girl, with an interest in making the most of things, would be an ever so much pleasanter plan."

"It sounds so, certainly," cheerfully assented the doctor, "but I rather believe in the truth of the proverb, 'When Poverty comes in at the door, Love flies out at the window.' It doesn't do to disregard the wisdom of the ancients, does it, Mrs. Graham? No, no, I am not fitted for love in a cottage, and I won't marry till I can do it comfortably."

"Then you will have to look out for a wife with money," said Mrs. Ansley. "I'm afraid they aren't plentiful hereabouts; and for my own part, I think money may be too dearly bought."

But now the Vicar could wait no longer. He bore down upon us.

"Mrs. Ansley, I know it is no use to ask you to play; but you'll come, won't you, Mrs. Graham?"

"Now, Mr. Danton," I said, "you know perfectly well that never in the whole course of my life have I been able to hit a ball! Why don't you say honestly that you have come to fetch Mr. Barrington?"

"Well, so I have," acknowledged the Vicar.

They were soon busy arranging sides, and the game began. One objection I have to bowls is the amount of stooping required. You have two wooden balls portioned out to you, take the best aim you can, don't get anywhere near the "Jack," pick the wretched things up, and it is da capo ad lib. I tried once, so I know. However, I noticed that in this game there was no picking up required from Cherry. Mr. Barrington and she were on the same side, and somehow the bowls were always in his hands at the end of a "round," which was a very pleasant arrangement for her.

"I declare," said I to myself, "I have just come home at the beginning of a romance. It will be most interesting to watch it work out; and Cherry is just the ideal wife for a doctor, with the exception

that she possesses no money. I wonder, though, if he is good enough for her. I must find out more about him."

Just then Harry Ford bore down upon me with a cheerful:

"Have some lemonade, Mrs. Graham?"

"Oh, thank you, Harry. I should like some very much. So you aren't playing bowls. Mr. Danton seems to have a good team this afternoon. What sort of a player is Mr. Barrington?"

"Oh, first-rate," said the boy. "You see, he's had a lot of practice here lately, and knows all the tricks of the ground nearly as well as the Vicar."

"Things have got on faster than I thought," was my inward comment. Then—

"He's very much liked by everybody, isn't he?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said Harry vaguely, "Barrington's a decent chap enough; sings a rattling good comic song, good as Corney Grain, don't you know? You just wait till you hear him sing the 'Blushing Man.' It's his own composition, and always brings the house down. Ripping! Oh, there! they want me to cut in now." And off the boy went.

Well, that was the beginning of what Mrs. Danton and I called, to one another, "Cherry's romance." That summer was just perfection; and besides the usual garden parties, there were numerous informal meetings for tennis, and several picnics to the various lions of our lovely neighbourhood. It got to be an understood thing that on these occasions the doctor should be pretty Cherry Danton's squire, and Mrs. Danton and I used, in strict confidence, to make all the arrangements for the future of the good-looking young couple. I revelled in the thought of assisting at the choice of papers, et cetera, in which I flatter myself I have a rather pretty taste.

At last September came, and Cherry's visit, which had been lengthened on several occasions, came to an end. Mrs. Danton, who saw her off, told me that Mr. Barrington "happened to be at the station," and that when he said "good-bye," he remarked that he "was going to take his holiday in a fortnight, and thought of going north"—did I say Cherry lived in Yorkshire?—"might he have the pleasure of calling when he was in the neighbourhood?" and Cherry blushed, raised her lovely eyes to his, and said "Yes."

But the "best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley." An outbreak of scarlet fever kept the doctor hard at work for six weeks; and just as it was abating, he took the disease himself. When he was well enough to be moved, which was not till the New Year, he went home to his friends to be nursed, and we heard very little about him for some time. Then it somehow came to be understood that he did not mean to return to us, and presently we found that he had sold his practice to the middle-aged, very-much-married gentleman who had been acting as his locum tenens. Next we heard vaguely that he had bought another practice in a fashionable part of London.

"How on earth could he afford it?" demanded the Vicar, and then some one suggested that Mr. Barrington was going to be married.

"Ah, discovered an heiress, I suppose," commented Mr. Danton. "Well, I wish him good luck, wherever he may be."

You see the Vicar, good man, had no notion of the romance Mrs. Danton and I thought so evident to the meanest capacity. We two retired into a secluded corner and discussed the engrossing subject in all its bearings.

"I'm certain," said I indignantly, "that he was in love with Cherry. Why, he never had eyes for any one else when she was present."

"Just what I thought," agreed Cherry's aunt, "and, for the matter of that, I think so still. If it hadn't been for that horrid scarlet fever he would have gone to Yorkshire, and everything would have come right. It would have been delightful to have the dear girl settled near us!"

"Oh, dear, I could shake the man!" I wailed. "It's just an illustration of the force of circumstances. When he was weak and ill, he was naturally in a condition to fall a prey to a designing heiress."

Mrs. Danton laughed.

"My dear Margery," said she, "aren't you getting on a little too fast? Mr. Barrington is very nice, but hardly the man an heiress would be anxious to annex."

"Of course you are right, Mrs. Danton," I acknowledged penitently, "but I am so provoked, I can't take a dispassionate view of things. I wonder if Cherry will feel it much."

"She won't show it if she does," asserted Mrs. Danton. "Cherry has plenty of spirit, and is proud, too, in spite of her gentle ways. She has never said a word to

lead me to suppose she cared for Mr. Barrington, only—I'm afraid she did, and Cherry isn't one to change easily. Some girls fall in and out of love half-a-dozen times in the year, but I always thought it would be once for all with Cherry. And how could she help liking a man who did everything he could to please her? Oh, why, why did he go and catch the fever?"

"Is she coming here soon?" I asked.

"I don't know what to do about it," sighed Mrs. Danton. "I'm afraid it will be painful to her to come; but, on the other hand, it will look so marked if she doesn't. Besides, my husband is beginning to ask 'when Cherry will be here,' and he never will take a hint, but will keep on bothering until I either send the invitation or explain fully why I don't, and I can't humiliate Cherry like that."

"It's very odd," said I thoughtfully, "that it should be considered a humiliation. Suppose a man falls in love without any hope of return, he is never considered to have degraded himself; in fact, he is applauded. Poets and novelists delight to do him honour, and to hold up his disinterested adoration to the admiration of the world. Look how Dante is commended for his worship of Beatrice! But the unfortunate girl who gives away her heart unsought is only a subject for scorn and contempt. It isn't fair. Why should what is admirable in one sex be despicable in the other?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Mrs. Danton. "I don't know that I ever thought of it before, and certainly, as you say, it isn't fair. Only, you see, we must take the world as we find it. We can't set ourselves against universal opinion with any hope of success. And in spite of your brave words, Margery, how would you like to exhibit a hopeless attachment to a man who didn't want you?"

"Heaven forbid!" I exclaimed; and Mrs. Danton laughed.

"Exactly," she remarked. "Well, on the whole I think I will ask Cherry as usual, and then it will rest with her to accept or decline the invitation."

So the letter was despatched. Somewhat to my surprise Cherry accepted with every appearance of pleasure, and in due course she arrived.

"Just the same as usual," her aunt decided, with an air of relief, "so of course, Margery, you and I were mistaken. We must never let her know what we imagined."

Just the same as usual? Well, perhaps so. Again she listened to old Mrs. Ansley's interminable tales; again she played bowls, and laughed and chattered, and brightened us all up; and yet—was she just the same? Sometimes I felt inclined to cry when I looked at her—and I am not given to shed tears—and then I would try to take comfort from the thought that Mrs. Danton believed the whole romance to be but a figment of the imagination, and held that there never had been anything between Mr. Barrington and Cherry. Even to this day I am doubtful, when I consider the matter dispassionately, whether my proofs would convince anybody; and yet—I know!

Oh, poor little Cherry, pluckily appearing "just the same," when the sunshine has gone out of your life, the glamour departed!

Matters were in this state, when one day I had a visit from Harry Ford.

"I say, Mrs. Graham," said the boy, "who do you think I came across in London the other day? Why, Barrington! He's going to be married. Aren't you awfully surprised? I am. Why, I thought he wanted Cherry Danton, but I'm jolly glad to be mistaken."

"Why are you glad, Harry?" I asked.

Harry positively blushed.

"Did I say I was glad, Mrs. Graham? Oh well, you know. . . Oh, you know quite well. . . . No fellow could see Cherry without . . . But I never thought there was a chance for me because of Barrington. Do you think I should have a chance if I waited, Mrs. Graham? Oh, I know she doesn't care for me now; she's just friendly and all that—but perhaps she might some day. Only it isn't likely she'd think me good enough," ruefully added poor Harry, who had a very humble opinion of his own attractions. "Anyhow," he continued more hopefully, "Barrington's out of the way. He's asked me to be his best man. I said 'no' at first, but he bothered me so, that at last I said, 'Well, I didn't mind if she made such a point of it as all that. The girl's a cousin, with lots of tin, I fancy, and Barrington says he's been half engaged to her all his life—at least, he says his family say he has. So you see, he sort of couldn't get out of it! No, he didn't say that exactly, but that's what he meant. She came to help nurse him when he was getting better, so that's how it all happened, don't you know! Oh, I say, Mrs. Graham, what does a fellow have to do when he's best man?" and Harry launched out into an animated discussion

of the duties of his exalted position, and finally took his leave, promising to tell me all about "old Barrington's turning-off" when it was over.

By this time it was June again, but not like the June of last year, when the sun shone, and the sky was always blue. This new June was cold and wet; and on Barrington's wedding-day the skies rained as if another Deluge were beginning.

"It was simply beastly, Mrs. Graham," said Harry Ford.

"I'm sure I don't care!" said I morosely.

"Oh, come, now, Mrs. Graham, Barrington's a rattling good sort, and you ought to be sorry for him, instead of being down on him like that," remonstrated Barrington's best man.

"Why should I be sorry for him?" I asked, with some curiosity.

Harry didn't answer the question, but plunged into his story.

"Well, it poured buckets full, and the bridesmaids, eight of them, stood at the door of the church and shivered; and old Barrington stood at the foot of the chancel steps with his back to everybody, and I stood by him, and kept saying over what I had to do to myself. I knew I had to give a big fee to one chap, and a little one to another, and after all, I got mixed and gave them wrong. I was in a stew, I can tell you! I had to go to the fellow I gave the big fee to and ask for it back, and he said he was just coming to tell me. I wish he had done it before I told him. Oh, well, yes, of course you want to know about the bride. She came in with her father, who gave her away. Pretty? Good gracious, no! Nice enough, I dare say. Did I give her a kiss? Why, Barrington even didn't do that until some one reminded him, and I didn't want to. Besides, I was so bothered with the things I had to see to, I couldn't take much notice of other things. Oh, it's all very well to laugh, Mrs. Graham, but you've never been best man, and don't know what it is.

"We got back to the house somehow, and people grumbled at the weather no end; and I heard one old fellow saying, 'Happy is the bride that the rain falls on,' and some one told him to shut up, as he was saying it all wrong. Then we went into the dining-room. There was a long table at the end, with a whacking wedding-cake in the middle—weighed about a ton, I should think. My bridesmaid was a nice enough little girl, and I got her some tea and things; and then she said she'd like an ice, so I went to get it. Just then there was the most awful noise you can imagine—a sort of crashing and rending, and all that. I heard an old lady say faintly, 'Is it a bomb?' Fancy any one wanting to blow old Barrington up! You wouldn't mind, you say? Poor old Barrington!

"Anyhow, it wasn't a bomb, though it did nearly as much damage. You see, the bride had just gone to cut the cake, and the table couldn't bear anything more—'last straw,' et cetera. It gave way in the middle, and you never saw such a sight. Over went the urns, and all the cakes and fruit and things slid down the inclined plane and mixed themselves up in a jolly heap. I picked up one urn and Barrington grabbed the other before the spirit-lamps had time to set things on fire, but the tea and coffee ran into the ices, and they were all spoilt. One of the waiting-maids went off into hysterics, and flopped screaming into a chair; and the old gentleman who said the proverb about the rain wrong dipped his handkerchief into a jug of lemonade on the sideboard, and mopped her face with it. That brought her round, I can tell you. Somebody said, 'What an omen!' and somebody else said, 'Nonsense!' Then the bride went away and changed her things, and she and Barrington went off without anybody so much as remembering the rice, or even the old slipper; and I went too, precious glad that it was over. You don't catch me being best man again in a hurry!"

So Barrington and his bride went out into the storm and rain to begin a new life together, and poor little Cherry talked and laughed as usual, and kept a brave face to the world, with her sorrow carefully buried out of sight.

It was Harry Ford who gave me the only glimpse I ever had of this hidden grief.

He came to see me once, looking so unlike his usual cheerful self, that I had to ask him what was the matter.

"It's no use, Mrs. Graham," he said, "there's nothing to stay in England for now. I shall go to Mashonaland or somewhere," he added vaguely.

"Tell me about it, Harry," I entreated.

"There's nothing to tell," said Harry. "I always knew I wasn't good enough, though I'd do anything to please her if she'd only have me. But she won't. I begged and prayed, and she said, 'Oh, Harry,

I can't care for you like that. I would if I could. Surely I haven't done anything to make you think I did! If it is at all my fault, forgive me, forgive me. I couldn't bear to think I had made any one suffer through my carelessness—that by my conduct I had given you cause to think —what isn't true.' Of course I said she hadn't; and then I said I knew I wasn't clever, like Barrington for instance, and I meant to go on and say that though I might be stupid, I had sense enough to love her, but she suddenly began to cry as if her heart would break, and I knew she didn't want me any longer, so I went."

"Alas, how easily things go wrong!"

THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPEMENT OF ELECTRICITY.

HALF a century ago electricity was little more than an interesting scientific toy, from which remarkable and often startling results were obtained in the laboratory. Experimental beginnings had at that time been made in most of the chief directions in which its practical applications have since become so prominent a feature of our daily life, but the beginnings were small, and, except to a few far-seeing workers, gave no promise of the immense developements they potentially contained. In the amazingly rapid advance of electricity to its present prominent position in industrial life, more than in any other department of practical knowledge, theory and practice have gone hand in hand, science aiding industry, and industry stimulating science. The physicist, studying the marvellous phenomena of this mysterious force by experiment and by the most refined mathematical processes, has constantly come to the assistance of the mechanician, showing him how to overcome the difficulties he has met with in its practical application, and how best to attain the desired results with economy of power and of material, while the mechanician, perfecting his constructive devices in every detail, has set newer and ever more complicated problems before the physicist for his solution.

In many lines of life the practical man can get on well enough without theoretical knowledge, in all he would be much better of it, but in dealing with electricity ignorance of theory is fatal to the practical man. He need not, like the scientist, concern himself with the ultimate essential nature of electricity, with the yet unsolved problem of what it really is, but if he would not have, every now and again, his machines wasting power, or destroying themselves by improper adjustment, and would be able on the spot to put right the numerous accidental derangements to which his complicated installations are liable, he must have, besides complete technical knowledge of his business, a much larger theoretical equipment than is required by, say, the engineer of an Atlantic liner. This necessity works for thoroughness all round, and provides a stimulus to advance which bids fair to hasten the day when electricity shall have rendered all other machines obsolete and useless.

There are abundant statistics which show the immense extent of electrical enterprise, and the enormous amount of capital already invested in it—remuneratively may well be supposed, for the word is everywhere "forward," and there are no signs of retrenchment. The figures of one year, whether of miles of ocean cables or land telegraph lines, telephone lines, street railways, or electric lamps in use, are left far behind next year. Of ocean cables alone there are now nearly one hundred and forty-three thousand miles, which have been sunk in the depths of the sea at a cost of something like forty million pounds, and require about forty specially-constructed telegraph steamers to be constantly employed in keeping them in order. This is all practically the growth of less than forty years, and now there is probably no important city in any part of the world which is not within a few seconds' or minutes' communication with London.

Land telegraphic and telephonic lines now cover most civilised countries with a network of wires, and have so changed and improved the conditions of commercial life, that we can now but wonder how the people of a generation or so back managed to carry on their business at all. The telephone is to some extent a rival of the telegraph, and for certain purposes entirely supersedes it. Long-distance telephony may, indeed, ultimately succeed so far as to render the present method of sending written telegraphic despatches entirely obsolete, but there are indications of other remarkable and superior methods by the future developement of which ample employment may still be got for the older system.

Electricity is rapidly superseding horse-

power as a motor for street railways, and it cannot be doubted that it will ultimately displace every other form of traction; and though not yet much beyond the experimental stage in this direction, the electric motor will similarly take the place of the steam locomotive on all railways, long and short. In the United States electric cars are running on street railways aggregating six thousand miles in length—a greater mileage than that of the street railways operated with every other kind of motive power. Nearly one-third of this was built in 1892. No other country can show anything like this advance, but in the everyday application of electricity the United States have gone ahead without displaying any of that cautious and timid feeling of their way which so eminently characterises the municipalities of our conservative country.

As recently as 1879, a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported that there were no reasonable grounds for believing that the electric light would ever be a practical success. Their wisdom was not justified by the event. By 1888, London had one hundred thousand glow lamps in use, and these increased in number so rapidly that by the end of last year there were in use seven hundred thousand, and the various metropolitan supply associations have two hundred and sixty miles of underground mains. The sixty or seventy provincial towns which have adopted electric lighting, have at least four hundred miles of mains for supplying the current. The "Electrical Engineer" states that the smallest electric light installation in the world is to be found in the little village of Bremen, in Thuringia. It comprises a single arc lamp placed in the church, which is lighted when required by a small dynamo erected in the village mill, and driven by the mill-wheel by the power of the mill-brook.

The great problem which awaits solution is not the distribution of electricity: that has been practically solved, though great improvements in this direction may yet be expected; nor its application in any particular direction: it is pre-eminently an adaptable power, and it is already used in a host of ways, which are increasing in number and variety day by day, and may be multiplied "ad infinitum" without exhausting its marvellous capabilities. The difficulty which stands in the way of its almost universal adoption as the prime mover in every industrial and domestic mechanical operation, is the relative dearness of its production which is occasioned by the necessity, which has not yet been overcome, for the wasteful intervention of the steam-engine. Any day a process may be found for converting the energy stored up in coal into electricity directly, with but a fractional loss compared with that entailed by the present roundabout method of burning the coals to raise steam in the boiler of the engine by which the dynamo is worked. At each stage there is a leakage, the sum-total being so serious that there is finally available as motor, heating, or lighting power no more than a small percentage of the original fund of energy in the coal. When this is done away with, industry will be revolutionised. A few baskets of coal will suffice to run a big liner across the Atlantic, and a great manufactory can be run for a year with a few tons. The fortunate discoverer will, too, solve the problem of our fuel supply at the same time, by enormously prolonging the duration of the coal supplies.

There is, however, to be taken into account the possibility of a considerable improvement being effected by the utilisation of a great portion of the vast sum of energy which at present is merely running to waste in rapid rivers, waterfalls, and even the mighty tides themselves, for the production of electricity. Something has already been done in this direction. Rome is lighted and obtains much motive-power from the Tivoli Falls in the Alban Hills; and the Rhine drives dynamos which send power to Frankfort, one hundred and twenty miles distant, with a loss of less than twenty per cent. Various similar projects are either in operation or in progress, the most important so far being the works under construction for the partial utilisation of the enormous forces of the Falls of Niagara, which rank among the greatest engineering undertakings of modern times. Any considerable developement in this direction may have the result—not undesirable in some respects—of shifting the main centres of industry to districts at present but sparsely populated, or the favourite haunts of the tourist and the sportsman. The roaring Alpine torrent or the Highland waterfall may, before long, be as valuable, for the purpose of generating power, as a coal-mine in the Black Country.

With regard to methods of communication by telegraph and telephone, ingenious inventors are always at work devising new and startling improvements. Edison has found it possible to convey messages to and from

railway trains travelling at express speed, by utilising the inductive phenomena of electricity; and similarly others have found that messages may be sent across narrow arms of the sea without the necessity of laying a cable. Enthusiastic scientific men have even gone so far as to express their belief that it will be found possible, some time in the future, to dispense with wires and cables entirely and to send and receive messages to any distance through the sea, through the air, and perhaps even through the ether of space to the planets and the stars. By the telautograph of Professor Elisha Gray it is possible to reproduce in exact facsimile at one end of a telegraph line whatever the operator at the other end may write or sketch on paper, with a pencil in connection with the apparatus, and with the same speed at which he writes. One sanguine inventor claims to have devised an instrument by which from one end of a wire it will be possible to operate a typewriter at the other. Developing the idea, it becomes imaginable that one operator on a typewriter keyboard may be able to set type or work linotype machines simultaneously in a dozen cities at any distance.

Professor Bell is convinced that in the near future it will be possible to see by telegraph, so that a couple conversing by telephone can at the same time see each other's faces. Extending the idea, photographs may yet be transmitted by electricity, and if photographs, why not landscape views? Then the stay-at-home can have the whole world brought before his eyes in a panorama without moving from his chair. It seems, indeed, without pushing the matter too far meantime, that it should not be so very much more difficult to convey impressions of light and shade by electricity than to do the same for variations of sound. There is some hope of success in this from experimental researches on selenium, a non-metallic element which possesses, in a remarkable degree, the property of changing its conductivity in response to variations in the amount of light falling on it.

Some peculiar instruments have been devised which are likely to prove of great service in the warfare of the future. The "hydrophone" of Captain McEvoy is intended to act as an automatic harbour watchman. Its construction is such that when a torpedo-boat approaches within half a mile, or a man-of-war within a mile, the vibrations of the screw-propeller are detected, and sound an alarm in the signalling station. The "cryptophone," invented by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry some years ago, has been tried both for naval and military purposes. It consists of a sensitive microphone arrangement, which is buried two or three feet under the road to be watched, and connected by wires to the observing station at any suitable place, where the passage of half-a-dozen men gives clear indications in the telephone. Modified for naval use, it was found that the thud of a vessel's screw could be plainly heard a mile and a quarter away, and it is believed that four cryptophones would effectually warn a warship of the approach and course of a torpedo-boat. The instruments might also be put to practical use for communicating between vessels, or for preventing collisions during fogs.

It is in the arts of peace, however, that electricity may be made to render most efficient and manifold services. There is no branch of industrial life in which electricity does not now, or may not be expected at some future time, to perform some useful part, either as supplanting the older mechanical forces, or, with a peculiar power of its own, producing effects and yielding results unattainable otherwise. Thus in the great agricultural industry it is being largely used as a motive-power for operating the many different machines necessary, such as ploughs, threshing, chaff-cutting, and dairy machines, which may be conveniently situated at almost any distance from the source of energy. But besides this more ordinary employment, it has been found by many experimenters that the electric current, applied in various ways, to the seeds, to the roots, or to the growing plants by exposing them to the electric light at night, has a remarkably beneficial effect on plant growth, in many cases very largely increasing the crop. In the future there is some possibility of being able, by suitable plant, to control the rainfall. On a small scale a vigorous discharge of electricity has been found to bring down the moisture of fog-laden air by concentrating it into big drops, and a French savant has been trying a method of "rain-making" different from the American one of exploding dynamite. He sends a lightning conductor into the clouds by means of a kite, through which the clouds discharge their electricity and then condense into rain.

In Queensland an electric butter-making plant appears to have been tried with much success. The various churns and other appliances are driven by a small

electric motor, and the entire absence of heat and smell in the source of power is an advantage which in this particular industry must not be overlooked.

Some applications of electricity in other industries are deserving of brief mention. A new and rather remarkable tool is the electric saw, in which a platinum wire, brought to bright red heat by passing a strong current of electricity through it, cleaves the hardest wood with ease. By one application of this instrument trees may be felled in about an eighth of the time it would take to saw them down. The wire is drawn tight against the tree and immediately begins to burn its way through, and wedges are inserted to prevent the rift from closing as the charring proceeds. Another new tool is the electric-power hammer, which in general design resembles the steam hammer, but the steam cylinder is replaced by a series of coils through each of which a current of electricity may be passed separately. These act collectively or individually as may be required upon the piston-rod which answers to the core of a large electro-magnet.

The brick-making industry has been invaded by electricity, which is to some extent superseding the old kiln-drying process, the bricks being burnt by putting them into a covered iron mould, which holds about a thousand, and then turning on a strong current. In a very short time they are dried and burnt, ready to be turned out for sale. A recently invented machine, actuated by electricity, is intended for drilling holes in boilers, in the sides of iron vessels, and similar purposes. It has a peculiar advantage in that it holds itself on to the ship or boiler by simply passing a current through the magnets with which it is provided for the purpose. A new process for cleaning boilers consists in periodically sending currents of electricity through their shells, which disintegrates the scale formed on the shell and tubes, and renders it easily removed.

The domestic applications of electricity to heating, cooking, ironing, and the like, are practically but a matter of yesterday, and have not as yet made much progress. The appliances, in multifarious forms, are, indeed, already devised and on sale, and it only needs a sufficient cheapening of the current supplied by corporations or companies for this developement of electricity to be very largely taken advantage of. So far as practical trials have already been made, the utilisation of electricity in the household bids fair to be a perfect godsend to the careful housewife, from its cleanliness, readiness, and perfect ease of control.

Among the innumerable uses to which electricity has been put by ingenious inventors, there are many curious trifles, many of which show its infinite adaptability better than those of its applications which are on the large scale. To mention but a very few items of the daily lengthening list will suffice.

In America, in order to save the postman the trouble of knocking at the door when he puts a letter in the box, an arrangement is being introduced by which the raising of the flap of the box closes an electric circuit and rings a bell. Street lamps may be turned out at daylight by electricity by a peculiar arrangement. An electric wire is connected to all the lamp-posts in each district and attached to a clock in the offices of the responsible party. This clock is arranged so that a circuit is completed at the desired moment, and the lamps turned off. A lock for the doors of hotels or private houses is fitted with an electrical connection, so that it can only be opened when a current is passed by pressing a knob in some particular part of the building—the more secretly situated the better Jewellers and others having valuable stocks to protect may avail themselves of a clever application of electricity by which the door can be locked without the knowledge of a suspicious customer by pressing a secret knob, or if necessary in a case of suspicious haste to depart, he may be brought up standing by a door that may be locked instantaneously, whether partially or wholly closed.

An electrician who has made a special study of the subject thinks that in the not very distant future electrical fireworks will supersede the kind now used. He has declared that for a quite moderate outlay he could arrange an electrical display that would last for many years, and could be repeated as often as desired. It would comprise rockets, Roman candles, wheels, Niagara Falls, and all the most brilliant spectacular effects. The electric light lends itself admirably to the most varied and extraordinary decorative effects. The elaborate architecture of bride-cakes has been set off by arrangements of tiny incandescent lamps, and translucent jellies in which some of these lamps are buried have beautified the dinner-tables of scientific hosts.

In India the intrusion of snakes into dwellings has been prevented by laying

two wires before the doors and round the house, which are connected with an induction apparatus. When a snake proceeds to crawl over the wires he makes contact, and receives a shock which either kills him or effectually scares him. In a somewhat similar way delicate wire netting, attached to a battery, is used to ward off the attacks of that terror of the night in hot climates—the mosquito. The lion-tamer has pressed electricity into his service, and wields a wand with which he can administer shocks at will sufficient to reduce to submission the fiercest animals. There has also been devised an electrical horsewhip, and a Belgian electrician has suggested a contrivance for stopping runaway horses by administering to them a sufficient shock by merely pressing a knob when occasion arises. On an American racecourse recently a jockey was ruled off the race track for having a concealed battery about his person, by means of which he could convey, through the points of his spurs, an unwonted and unsportsmanlike stimulus to his mount.

There are, as further examples of ingenuity, electric fans, which revolve rapidly on pressing a button, and generate a pleasant cooling current of air; walking-sticks provided with a glass knob handle containing a small incandescent lamp, with storage batteries concealed in the stick; electric harpoons which do away with much of the danger attaching to whale-fishing, as the weapon, when it enters the leviathan, administers a succession of some hundreds of shocks a minute, rendering the animal insensible and an easy prey to its captors.

These are but gleanings from the fields already occupied, and those who know most of the subject have expressed their firm belief that the immediate future may bring forth discoveries in the domain of electricity which may render possible applications in the daily business of life as startling and marvellous, in comparison with our present experiences, as the telegraph and the telephone were at their first inception.

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART V.

The rubber that night was unusually prolonged; the games were won trick by trick, each side counting alternately. It was eleven o'clock before Arthur went home; much too tired, physically and mentally, to do anything but tumble into bed. He slept until twelve next morning, awaking astonished at his lateness, but wonderfully rested and refreshed. It was a radiantly sunny morning. Birds were singing lustily on the cherry-tree round his windows. The air was palpitating with vigorous life. He sprang from bed with a laugh at his laziness and plunged into his icy bath.

"What a fool I was to let myself be worried and irritated into making my little girl miserable!" he told himself while he dressed. "I suppose it was the wind, or the barometer, or something. There is a weight and blindness gone out of the air to-day. I will write her such a letter—no, I won't. I will go to London and fetch her back. I have nothing else to do." He looked into "Bradshaw." There would be a train at two o'clock. That was fortunate. He was ravenously hungry, and must have time for a good square meal first. Now he came to think of it, he had lived chiefly on tobacco for the last few days. "Yesterday," he reflected, "I had nothing to speak of until seven, and precious little then. I don't think I had any breakfast at all. I couldn't have eaten until I put things right with Alice, and she took all my appetite away. The day before, I believe I had nothing but grilled bone and eggs for breakfast. I remember I could not eat till Kilmeny was finished, and then it was too late, and I counted upon the Stranges' supper to make up, and got none—and so for days back. I could eat a herd of oxen now."

He ate a considerable portion of one ox in steak, accompanied by several eggs, a mountain of toast, and a pot of strong coffee. Then he packed a bag, and set off to catch the train.

He was in tremendously high spirits. He had just time to buy an armful of papers, find a seat in a smoking carriage, and he was off. Two men he knew travelled all the way with him, and later on he had another nap. The journey passed quickly enough. He reached King's Cross at eight—in time to see Alice that night.

A porter shut him into a hansom, and asked what address he wished to be taken to. He had completely forgotten it. Ah! he had it in his pocket—Miss Downing's envelope. He searched in the uncertain lamplight, but could not find it. It must be in his bag. He had himself driven to the "Tavistock" in Covent Garden; he

would search more thoroughly there, but time was lost.

He sought, but he could not find a trace of the envelope in any corner or crease. It was now nine o'clock; too late to telegraph to Miss Downing, and he could not for the life of him remember where Alice was staying. He only knew that she was not at the Kinnairds' house in Thurloe Square. He would go there. The Kinnairds might be in town, and would know.

He drove at once to Thurloe Square, but the house was shut up, and there was a hoarding in front betokening the presence of workmen. Nothing could be done until morning, which would be Sunday.

First thing in the morning he telegraphed to Miss Downing: "Alice's address lost. Please send."

"Please send what?" fluttered Miss Downing, who was not accustomed to telegrams on Sundays—or, indeed, any days—and Procrustean chopping of halfpenny-worths. "And where?" she thought next. She had no idea Arthur had gone to town. While she was debating, the postman came. The Sunday delivery was late at Pyncholk. She would be late for church; the bells were ringing; but she must have her letters. There was one from Alice.

"I had better read this first," she said.

It was not very long; only one page:

"DEAR AUNT,—As my engagement is completely broken off, I am going to Norway at once with Cousin Millicent and Elinor. It suits them better to go now, as there is nothing to detain them in England. I have plenty of things with me. Sorry to put you out, but it cannot be helped.—Your affectionate Niece, ALICE."

"The telegraph boy says, is there any answer?" said Mary.

"Answer? How can I answer? Answer what? I can't stop her if she has gone—she says at once."

"The telegram, ma'am."

"I suppose I must answer that," said Miss Downing helplessly. So the answer Arthur received was: "Alice has gone to Norway. I do not know her address, or why."

Arthur accordingly dashed back to Pyncholk by the next possible train, which being of Sabbath slowness did not allow him to appear in Miss Downing's drawing-room until ten o'clock.

"What does it mean?" he cried fiercely, as if he suspected the demure old lady of compassing the abduction of his sweetheart.

"You know best," said Miss Downing severely. She had gone through a terrible day. First there had been the disturbance of Sunday calm by telegrams, to say nothing of their sinister import. Secondly, the delay they had occasioned had stopped her going to church. So she had nursed her secret all the morning, racking her brains how to explain such a fiasco to the neighbourhood, so as to silence impertinent questions, guesses, and rumours. A wedding broken off ten days before the appointed wedding day! It was enough to make the world stand still. And to heighten the shame and confusion, she suddenly remembered Alice's banns were being read in church for the second time. She had never thought of sending to stop them. It was as well, after all, that the telegrams and excitement had stopped her going to hear them. How could she have listened in silent unconcern to such a publication of false news?

In the afternoon Mrs. Waterton had dropped in.

"I feel quite lonely without Lydia," she said. "I hear Alice has gone away, too, and Mr. Knollys. He went to town the same day as Lydia, by the later train. I hear Alice has gone abroad."

"Alice went to London," said Miss Downing evasively, "to have her wedding dress fitted on."

"Oh, indeed!" Mrs. Waterton exclaimed, with so much expression of genuine surprise that Miss Downing could have turned her out of the room. "But I felt sure it was all right when the banns were read this morning."

"Of course it is all right. What should have been wrong?" Aunt Robina asked quite fiercely.

"I was puzzled at hearing Alice had gone to Norway," said the rectoress. "Your Mary told my Jane something of the kind, but one knows how servants gossip and mix things. It seemed so odd that he and Lydia should have gone to town almost together, and Alice to Norway so shortly before the wedding."

"Gone with Miss Boyd!" exclaimed Miss Downing. "What a very absurd idea!" But she thought of the sittings, and the flowers, and Alice's misery after the ball, and her heart sank low indeed.

It rose again at the sight of Arthur that night, his wild face, his despair, the haste and energy with which he had travelled. She had not really a suspicion left of his infidelity, though he must certainly account

for what was so suspicious in his behaviour. He had done enough to make Alice miserable, if not ultimately to wreck her life.

"It means that you have slighted her cruelly by the way you ran after that horrid Miss Boyd."

"Miss Boyd!" he exclaimed, with such intense impatience that the name sounded like an expletive. "I shall do murder if I hear her name again. I could go over to the Rectory now and strangle her;" and he looked so extremely like doing it, that Miss Downing was more alarmed than relieved, and did not at once remember to say, with marked meaning, "You know she is not at the Rectory now."

"I neither know nor care where she is," he protested. "The question is, where is Alice?"

Reassured in spite of herself by the sincerity of his face and manner, she gave him Alice's letter to read.

"At once!" he exclaimed. "Why, she may not have gone yet. She cannot leave London to-day, and I have been kicking my heels there for hours when I might have stopped her."

"But she says the engagement is off."

"It is nothing of the sort. How can it be if I know nothing about it? It takes two to play at that game. I must go back to-night. I may see her yet."

"It is too late now, and if they didn't go on Saturday—I don't see how they could go quite so soon, now I come to think of it—they are sure to go first thing in the morning. The last Sunday train has gone. Sleep upon it."

"Sleep upon it! It seems to me I have been sleeping all this time."

"There is nearly sure to be a letter from Mrs. Kinnaird in the morning," said Miss Downing. "Even she would not treat me with such disrespect as to carry my niece off to Norway without any apology or explanation. You can come and see it if you like. You cannot do anything else that would be of any sort of use."

"I could go by the early train."

"And be forbidden the house, or find them gone. I have not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Kinnaird has persuaded and incited her to it. She would do anything to spite me. Alice has changed since she got to London."

Mrs. Kinnaird was an amiable, if worldly woman. Her real fault in Miss Downing's eyes was the having been born an à Court. The à Courts held their heads very high, and presumed to look down upon the Downings. Therefore, Miss Downing hated and tried to despise them—exclusive, of course, of Alice, who was half a Downing by birth and wholly by education, her father having died before she was born, and her mother four years after.

Arthur was utterly miserable, but he took Miss Downing's advice. It would be useless to attempt seeing Alice guarded by malevolent Kinnairds. He went to his inn, and returned before post-time next morning. There were no letters at all.

"They must have left town on Saturday after all," said Miss Downing. "We must wait to hear from Norway, or until to-morrow—I forgot to reckon on letters not leaving London on Sundays."

"I will go up by the ten train," said Arthur impetuously.

"It is just possible Alice wrote off in a huff," said Miss Downing. "I was thinking it all over in bed. She wasn't in the least determined on breaking off with you when she went. The Kinnairds have just forced her to write that letter."

"Forced her! How could they? She is a free agent."

"People can force a girl to do very silly things by playing upon her pride. She would wake up feeling how silly she had been, and come straight back home. I shouldn't be surprised if she turns up by the six train. Weddings can't be broken off so near the time, all for nothing. And it is for nothing. She was jealous of Miss Boyd, and now Miss Boyd has gone away—to London, too! It really would look just as well if you didn't go to London just now, Arthur—Alice in Norway, most likely, and Miss Boyd there. It might be made to sound like confirmation of everything."

The very idea that Miss Boyd was in London filled Arthur with a repugnance so strong, that his desire to seek Alice there was as nothing compared with his shuddering eagerness to avoid coming within a four-mile radius of Miss Boyd. He consented to wait in Pyncholk for farther news. He might even miss Alice by leaving.

She did not come; but next morning a letter came from Mrs. Kinnaird, dated Sunday:

"My dear Miss Downing,—Alice has told you that I am going to carry her off to Norway on Monday. It is all a most miserable business. The only thing is to get her

away, poor girl. It is most fortunate that she came to me, and that we were going to Norway sooner or later. I can never, never express my regret that it was partly through me that she became acquainted with such a scoundrel. No other word expresses him. It is most extraordinary that a man capable of such outrageous conduct could have ever passed himself off upon anybody for any sort of a gentleman. Fortunately for him, Alice has no relative as yet capable of using a horsewhip—for even in our days of emancipation, we women have not acquired that accomplishment. The poor darling bears up wonderfully. I fancy the blow was too sharp and terrible to be realised all at once. She was simply stunned by his brutal words. No doubt change will do a great deal for her, and I will soon find somebody to put that cad out of her head, now I have got dear Elinor settled. In this dreadful new trouble I had forgotten to mention that the very day Alice arrived, Elinor and Percival Grey became engaged. They saw a good deal of each other at Dieppe, and he followed her to town and proposed. He has a thousand a year now, of private income, and excellent prospects at the bar. He accompanies us, of course, to Norway. I am so glad Alice has her nice new frocks with her. Everything works together for good. Percival expects to meet a friend at Hardanger, Mr. Clare, of the great firm of Clare, Sons, and Clare. Who knows what may happen? Many a heart is caught in the rebound.—Yours sincerely, MILLICENT KINNAIRD.

"I told Percival about dear Alice's trouble. He is like a son, you know, and Alice's cousin: the nearest thing she has to a brother. He knows of a Virginie Vaucluse, a most disreputable person; of course she must be the same. The descriptions answer, and the name is not common."

"Who on earth is Virginie Vaucluse?" asked Miss Downing, stopping in her reading.

"Nobody—never heard—what of Alice?" panted Arthur, who had watched the perusal with impatience beyond all restraint.

"Read for yourself," said Miss Downing, perfectly rigid with outraged feeling.

He snatched at the letter, and devoured it with eager, amazed eyes.

"What does it all mean?" he asked. "Brutal words. I never said a brutal word to a woman in my life, much less to Alice. 'Virginie Vaucluse!' I swear I never heard of such a person. There is some horrible mistake, and I might have set it right if I had not lost that wretched address. Hullo! here's one for you at the end—you missed that."

"For me?"

She took the letter, and read the end of the postscript which she had overlooked:

"'I must say that I don't understand how you could lend yourself to dealing the child such a blow!' I! what did I do?" she asked, bewildered. "I allowed the engagement, that was all. I didn't throw you in the girl's way. How could I guess your private character if she did not?"

"My private character! Come, it is a little too bad if you are to take these wild accusations for gospel!" he cried. "I see what it is"—suddenly hopeful—"this is somebody else's letter got into the wrong envelope."

"It begins with my name correctly written," said Miss Downing drily.

"Then I have some enemy who has invented all this—Freeland, no doubt," starting forward. "I will go at once and wring the meaning of it out of him."

"He is not at home. He is shooting somewhere."

Arthur groaned. Everybody seemed to slip away into far distance when he tried to touch them.

"But you must see there is a mistake," he said more quietly. "This name, Virginie Vaucluse—I never heard the name before in my life. Who is this man who pretends to know it? Grey, a barrister—I have it—I remember meeting him at the Kinnairds'. I will go to him——"

"He has gone to Norway."

Arthur smothered something stronger than a groan.

"But Chevening knows him! I can get his address from Chevening—his club address, any way. I suppose his letters will be sent to him. By-the-bye, what address do the Kinnairds give? It will be the same as Grey's."

"None. Their letters will be sent on, too, though, won't they? If there is anything left to explain, you can write to Alice at Thurloe Square or Oxford Terrace."

"Anything to explain! There is everything."

"You gave her grave reason to be angry," said Miss Downing; "your conduct with Miss Boyd was remarked by every person in the room."

"Miss Boyd? But there is nothing about Miss Boyd now, it seems; there is

quite another person come into the case, an entirely new developement."

Miss Downing coloured and put her lips together. This show of genuine astonishment had convinced her for the moment, but now it struck her that the name was very like an actress's, and young men were all alike. Arthur was, she feared, a sadly dissipated person. Had he not behaved very strangely at the ball? It was hinted he had had too much wine.

"The person is perhaps a model," she suggested.

"I don't remember any model of the name—and what on earth could there be about any model to come between Alice and me? It is preposterous."

Miss Downing, for all her prim severity, was a woman, and it touched and convinced her to see Arthur's genuine bewilderment and grief.

"I dare say he has had his fling like other young men," she thought indulgently, even sympathetically. Truly every woman is at heart a rake. She could forgive the handsome boy who had at least forgotten any impression made upon his heart before he gave it to Alice, and who now flung himself on the sofa, buried his face in his hands, and sobbed. Mrs. Kinnaird was quite capable of trumping up some old gossip about a model, and working upon Alice's feelings, already sore from the quarrel over Miss Boyd.

"I will write to Alice to-day," she said. "I will ask her to tell me exactly what her cousin has told her about this Virginie. It will take some time to get her answer, but we must just make the best of it and be patient. If I were you I would go and shoot something or other for a week. We cannot possibly have news sooner than that."

Arthur took her advice in the spirit, if not in the letter. He could not endure Pyncholk without Alice, and it was intolerable to know how people would talk, and wonder, and stare. Miss Downing would give out that the wedding was put off on account of Alice's health. Nobody would believe it, but then nobody would have believed the literal truth, whatever it had been; not because of any improbability, but because people like to guess such puzzles for themselves. Arthur did not go to shoot grouse or partridges, but he went off on a walking tour through the English lakes: keeping Miss Downing posted from day to day as to his next address, and within convenient reach of telegrams and trains. But no summons came. He extended his tour to a fortnight, and then returned to Pyncholk. He could wait no longer even at four hours' railway distance from a letter that surely must come one day.

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 302.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE first words that Lady Karslake spoke the next morning contained a bidding to her maid to order her horse for ten o'clock. It was a perfect December morning, bright, frosty, and invigorating; and from Lady Karslake's face, as she came downstairs in her habit and hat, every trace of the strong feeling of the night before had disappeared.

Its expression was not altogether normal, however. The laughing flash of her eyes was more frequent and more brilliant than usual, as though the sensitive temperament behind were rather unusually delicately strung.

The situation which she should take in serious earnest had never yet presented itself to Eve Karslake; and in her own opinion, and in the opinion of those who knew her best, it never would or could so present itself. A sense of humour; even when it is that most perfect form, the complement and obverse of a sense of pathos; is a great preservative in either sex against any over-deep emotion. Couple a sense of humour in a woman with considerable mental capacity, and develope the combination in an atmosphere of absolute ease—entirely untouched by sorrow or struggle of any kind, personal or vicarious—and the result will naturally be the merest bowing acquaintance with strength of feeling.

Some such sequence of cause and effect had operated with Lady Karslake. Life had been perfectly smooth with her ever since she became conscious of life; it was smooth by circumstance, and it was smoothed further by the instinctive homage and consideration which her peculiar personal charm had never failed to win for her. She had known no family ties such as might have developed her affection. She had had innumerable offers of marriage before she was twenty, and a certain disdain for man's love, a holding cheap of what was thus lavished on her, was the inevitable result. Young men—the young men with whom she danced through her first London seasons—were the object of her lightest and most wholesale contempt. And when, during the fourth of these seasons, Sir William Karslake presented himself—a man of the world, a man with brains, a man who satisfied all her fastidious taste—she calmly ignored the thirty years that lay between them, and accepted him easily, almost indifferently. Whether he satisfied her so completely after four years of married life was a point on which she was hardly likely to be explicit, even with herself. But her wilfulness and her impulsiveness, traits which might have militated against married happiness, were an essential part of her charm in her husband's eyes, and he fostered them idly as a connoisseur fosters the delicate eccentricities of colour and form in the orchids of which he is proud. The disillusion, if any disillusionment there were, came from some cause quite other than any deliberate or conscious action on her husband's part; some cause which she would have been absolutely unable to define to herself, even if she had ever cared to take the trouble. There were side lights in her nature which her marriage had not taken into account.

It was those side lights of her nature that

were flashing and glowing this morning; it was those side lights which had been touched into that vivid life with which her whole personality was instinct as she galloped her horse through the frosty air. Her husband had insulted her; insulted her gratuitously. North Branston's close attendance at Hatherleigh Grange had necessarily involved a certain amount of intercourse with Lady Karslake; and Lady Karslake, influenced by an interest and appreciation engendered by their first meeting, had willed, carelessly enough, to cultivate the young doctor's acquaintance. She realised his brain-power, and she took a humorous delight, just touched with sympathy, in his position as the cleverest man in Alnchester. His grimness entertained her, and she liked to talk to him. She had had no other companion who was to her taste during her sojourn at Hatherleigh; her husband's illness had, indeed, isolated her almost entirely; she had indulged her proclivity for North Branston's society, as she had indulged any whim that presented itself to her throughout her life, with the careless serenity that never conceives the possibility of contradiction or arraignment. To her delicate and lofty pride — so perfect as to be absolutely unconscious — no opening for such a suggestion as that made by Sir William Karslake on the previous evening had ever presented itself. That her husband, the man with whom she had spent four years, should be capable of so outraging every instinct of her nature, stung her to the quick.

At the moment she had realised the insult intensely. The intensity had died out of the position for her by the morning. Tragedy and melodrama were out of her line, and the rôle of offended wife struck her in a purely farcical light. But every delicate fibre was ajar and quivering with indignation. Her resentment might—and did—laugh; but her whole consciousness tingled with it, nevertheless. It was inevitable under the circumstances that her indignation and resentment should tend involuntarily towards expression, and it was equally inevitable that the form taken by that expression should be dictated by the most wilful of contrary impulses.

She was on the brow of a slight hill about six miles from Hatherleigh when she drew rein, patting her horse's neck with the easy, affectionate touch of a good horsewoman, and glancing right and left over the country round. It was one of the prettiest districts about Alnchester, and seen under its present circumstances—the frosted trees sparkling in the sunshine, the winding river reflecting back the wintry blue of the sky—it looked its very best and brightest. And all its brightness, all its sparkle and light seemed to be reflected back into Lady Karslake's vivid face, as she sat and looked about her, and waited for her groom.

"Is there any road to Hatherleigh in that direction?" she said carelessly, lifting her whip and pointing. "I want to go back another way."

Lady Karslake was adored by her servants, and the man's answer was as ready and interested as it was respectful.

"Yes, my lady! Those cross-roads there—a little to the right, my lady—one of those takes you to Hatherleigh, through Winchford. It's only about seven miles that way."

The grey eyes glanced swiftly over the country thus indicated, and came back to the cross-roads; they strayed a little further, and then a sudden electric current seemed to pass through their owner, and they flashed into a spirited satisfaction; her lips parted and curved into a defiant, triumphant smile, she touched her horse lightly, and cantered down to the meeting of the roads. Then she drew rein, and waited for a horseman who was coming slowly along the road from the opposite direction.

The sound of the groom's horse as he slowly followed, seemed to arrest the apparently preoccupied attention of the horseman as he drew nearer. He looked up and saw the slender figure sitting motionless at the cross-road. Instantly he put his horse to a quick trot, and was passing her with no other sign of recognition than that involved in a formal removal of his hat when Lady Karslake stopped him. It was North Branston.

"No, Dr. Branston," said Lady Karslake. "Not like that, if you please!" She spoke in a quick, laughing tone; but there was a ring in it which gave it an essentially authoritative character.

North Branston had brought his horse to a standstill, and turned towards her perforce on her first words; but every line of his figure expressed reluctance and constraint. His face had hardened as he caught sight of her into a set that was singularly dark and forbidding.

"Can I be of any service to you, Lady Karslake?" he said.

She met his eyes, and made a little comprehensive gesture with her whip.

"I don't choose to be cut," she said lightly. "Practically cut, that is to say. You were going at an eminently conversational pace when I caught sight of you first. Take it again, and we'll go on together. It's too cold to stand still."

She began to walk her horse slowly in the direction of Hatherleigh.

The first interview between them, on the night of Sir William Karslake's sudden seizure, had set for North Branston the keynote on which all his subsequent acquaintance with Lady Karslake had been developed. He had admired her then, without thinking of it; and his admiration had increased without consciousness of its existence on his part. She had exercised some kind of fascination over him as a specimen of womanhood such as he had never before encountered; and the spell of that fascination had grown stronger. But as he had, at the first, appraised her impulses and her sensitiveness somewhat cynically, so in their after intercourse he involuntarily set her imperious womanly waywardness in the forefront of such estimate of her as he unconsciously made, and his vague appreciation of her charm went hand in hand with a mental process which instinctively held her cheap. North Branston had never learned to respect woman. His organ of respect was, indeed, almost entirely undeveloped.

He had fallen, however, in the course of the last two months, into the almost involuntary habit of humouring her, and he did so now. He put his horse in motion, and moved on at her side.

"The cut does not originate with me, Lady Karslake," he said. "I presume you know how matters stand?"

She lifted her whip in quick token of assent.

"Yes, yes!" she cried crisply. "I know, of course. My husband has taken a step which I—regret very much." A kind of pale flash passed across her face, and she looked straight before her; but she went on lightly and authoritatively. "But that is a professional matter, and I have nothing to do with you on professional lines, and decline to be implicated in professional doings."

She looked round at him, as she finished speaking; but North Branston did not look at her. The set of his face did not relax.

"There is no separating the professional and the personal, Lady Karslake," he said. He spoke with a reserve which was eloquent of cynical bitterness. "Sir William Karslake has chosen to dismiss me from professional attendance on him. Personal intercourse, as you will readily see, would be liable to moments of awkwardness under the circumstances."

Her eyes were still fixed on his, and quite suddenly the half-laughing, half-defiant excitement died out of her face. A flash of genuine indignation, of impulsive pity, sprang into her eyes and lit up every feature.

"Ah!" she cried, low and impetuously. "How angry you are! What a shame, what a shame it is!"

He turned sharply, almost checking his horse in the abruptness of the movement, and faced her with an angry flush mounting to his forehead. But as he met the undisguised, utterly unselfconscious sympathy of her look, the cynical words died upon his lips. He turned away and brought his whip down upon his horse's flank with a movement which made the animal bound forward. He checked it again; she gained his side in an instant, and they rode on together in silence.

After a minute or two North Branston spoke, in a low, still tone which told of strong feeling held rigorously in hand.

"I'm a fool to think twice of it!" he said. "A double-dyed fool to let it annoy me! I didn't know—" he paused abruptly and then resumed, "I didn't know that I had. What difference does it make?"

"It is such ungenerous treatment. Such a—such a horrid thing!"

The words came from Lady Karslake quick and impulsive, vibrating with the glow of that generous womanly sympathy which had so suddenly carried her away. She was entirely oblivious of the fact that it was her husband of whom she was speaking. Her tone seemed to penetrate to North Branston's consciousness. He turned his face towards her with a smile, and he spoke in a tone which, though it was sufficiently sardonic, was evidently intended to reassure her.

"Ungenerous treatment is only a phrase, after all," he said. "Unless one is sufficiently inexperienced to believe in its converse—and to expect it. I have grown past that elementary stage of existence, and take things as they come."

She glanced at him quickly. To take things as they came was her own undefined theory of life, but his tone touched her with a vague suggestion of another view of

that notion which was so lightly familiar to her.

"That is very philosophical of you," she said. "It is my philosophy, too. I hope you find it work well."

He made no answer; indeed, her tone demanded none; and they rode on in silence. It was one of those pauses brought about between two people by the unconscious necessity for adjusting their ideas to a new stage in the developement of their relations.

The silence was broken by Lady Karslake.

"Dr. Branston," she said impulsively, "why do you stay in Alnchester?"

North Branston started slightly at the sound of her voice, and turned towards her.

"Why do I stay in Alnchester?" he repeated vaguely.

"Yes. Why are you not in London? You are not the sort of man for this place. You ought to go away."

There was a direct interest, a genuine good-fellowship in her tone which deprived her imperious words of any possible suggestion of curiosity or intrusion. North Branston, meeting her eyes, paused a moment.

"Here I am," he said, rather as though he were humouring her by carrying on the subject she had started. "I don't find it worth while to consider why I am not somewhere else."

"You ought to consider it," she said imperiously. "You are very well aware that you are a clever man—too well aware of it for your good." She flashed a laughing, defiant smile on him. "What is the good of a clever man in Alnchester? What can he do? You ought to have ambitions."

"Ought I?" He was flicking his horse deliberately with his whip, and his eyes rested on her face with a curious expression in their sombre depths. "Rather unphilosophical, Lady Karslake. Don't you think they might interfere with the practice of taking things as they come?"

She looked at him for a moment in silence.

"You have ambitions," she said decidedly. "No, don't deny it—it's waste of time. Then why don't you use them? Is it laziness? No, you don't lead a lazy life."

"Thank you," responded North Branston coldly.

"Is it indifference? If so, you ought to rouse yourself and make an effort. Or is it pessimism?"

North Branston smiled sardonically.

"Have you ever heard the word necessity, Lady Karslake?" he said.

She was silent for a moment.

"Ah," she said slowly. "Necessity!"

The word was not a question, but North answered it as though it had been.

"I am in debt," he said, in a low, grating voice. "Dr. Vallotson is my creditor. I owe him such brains as I may possess. They were cultivated at his expense."

"Ah!" she said impulsively. "Ah, I see!"

There was a pause, during which the tread of their horses rang out clearly on the frosty air as they cantered along. Then she turned to him again.

"That is hard," she said gently.

The cynical lines were deep and set about North Branston's mouth as he returned her look.

"Your philosophy is rather skin-deep, is it not?" he said. "Why should you consider it hard?"

Her face changed suddenly into wilful, defiant challenge.

"My philosophy may not be perfect," she said lightly, "but yours is no better, I'm quite sure! We'll argue the matter out another time. For the present, our roads are going to part directly."

In point of fact, a few yards further on the road forked; one branch leading to the little village of Hatherleigh; the other being the Alnchester road. And a moment or two later, she pulled up her horse and North Branston followed her example.

"Shall we meet this evening?" she asked carelessly. "Are you going to the concert?"

He hesitated a moment, and then he made a gesture of assent.

"Yes," he said. "I think so."

"Good!" she responded gaily. "Au revoir!"

She nodded to him, lifting her whip in a gesture of farewell, and cantered away towards Hatherleigh.

The concert to which Lady Karslake had referred was one given annually by the Alnchester choral society, and was an occasion of considerable importance in the Alnchester world. It was one of the occasions—eminently exciting from this very reason—when the unwritten law which separated the doings of the town from the doings of the precincts passed into abeyance. Everybody who was anybody in the precincts, and everybody who was anybody in the town—and a great many who were nobodies—went to the concert;

and it was, moreover, one of the functions which were patronised by the county families.

North Branston's round that afternoon was a long one; and it was late when he reached Dr. Vallotson's house. As he hurriedly opened the front door and went into the hall, he met Mrs. Vallotson, who was coming downstairs.

Mrs. Vallotson was dressed for the concert; very handsomely and correctly dressed, according to Alnchester canons of taste, in dark-red velvet, made after the Alnchester reading of the term evening dress. The stern, defiant resolution which had attracted her daughter's attention on the previous day had settled so subtly into her expression that, though every line of her face was permeated by it, it was no longer noticeable except in the appearance of composed force which it gave her. And her whole effect was almost crudely strong and imposing.

She stopped as she saw North, her brows contracting involuntarily.

"You are not going to-night, I suppose?" she said.

"Yes," answered North briefly. "I am."

She paused a moment, and the set of her lips tightened.

"You must make haste, then," she said. "The carriage will be round at twenty minutes to eight."

Mrs. Vallotson had always made it clearly understood that she liked to be at the Town Hall on these occasions in good time, but not too early. She liked to make her entrance and proceed to her place in the best part of the hall when the place was sufficiently well filled to admit of her arrival making some little sensation, and she also liked to have some time for exchanging dignified greetings with her friends and commenting on other arrivals.

On this particular occasion the right moment was most happily hit upon. As she moved slowly up the room followed by Constance and North—Dr. Vallotson had found that his hard day's work demanded an evening's repose—a murmur of recognition and respect rose here and there about the room, which was, perhaps, three parts full of Alnchester in evening dress and suppressed excitement. And during the ten minutes that ensued her time was fully occupied in recognition and criticism.

The stream of arrivals had reached its flood and was rapidly thinning; the amateur orchestra had presented itself upon the platform, and had been received with vociferous applause; the first vigorous, if somewhat uncertain, notes of the overture were vibrating in the air when there was a little stir about the door, and up the room—quick, graceful, and self-possessed, in a soft green velvet cloak with some dark brown fur about it—came Lady Karslake. She had a girl with her; a girl who was recognised about the room as "Miss Howard of Sutton." She herself was not even known by sight to the majority of persons present, but though their own orchestra was thundering to them, every one in the room turned to look at her. She passed the Vallotson party with a little bow and a smile, and went on to her place further up and on the other side of the room.

And as if that charming little bow had exerted some magnetic influence over her, in Mrs. Vallotson's face, as she returned it stiffly, all the suppressed, controlled resolution sprang into sudden fierce relief. The covert defiance that lurked so strangely in her eyes leaped up in a flash, and then sank down again leaving her eyes harder than before.

Lady Karslake did not look again directly towards the Vallotson party until that quarter of an hour's interval arrived, which was at least as dear to the heart of Alnchester as any of the musical efforts which preceded and followed it. Then she turned, caught Mrs. Vallotson's eyes, smiled with a pantomimic expression of her admiration of the performances just concluded, and letting her eyes wander to North Branston, she smiled again and deliberately lifted her fan with a little beckoning gesture. North Branston was standing up, surveying the scene about him cynically enough. He moved promptly and walked down the room to where she sat.

"Good evening," she said. "You don't look as though you were enjoying yourself. Sit down there"—pointing to a seat temporarily vacated by an enthusiast who had rushed to congratulate a performer—"and I will amuse you!"

Mrs. Vallotson had necessarily seen the gesture with which Lady Karslake had summoned North, and she had watched his tacit response. Her conversation during the interval was as plentiful as the occasion demanded, but it did not contain one single word of approval of any one or anything, and the rigid set of her features never relaxed. She did not once glance towards the place where Lady Karslake

and North sat together, but she seemed to know, nevertheless, when North rose to return to his own seat—the last moment of the interval having arrived—and she was waiting for him, so to speak, when he reached her. She looked up at him with the repulsion in her eyes singularly accentuated.

"Under the circumstances Lady Karslake would have shown better taste if she had contented herself with a civil bow to you!" she said, in a quick, biting tone.

North Branston sat down in silence.

NOCTURNAL LIGHTS.

Amongst the nocturnal lights are the luminous insects. The common glow-worm —Lampyris noctiluca—during the summer season, particularly in the month of June, may be seen after sunset, near bushes and in the neighbourhood of roadsides. It has been called a worm simply because of its frequently being seen creeping or reposing in the grass. During the day the creatures conceal themselves amongst leaves of plants. Both sexes are luminous, but there is less brilliancy in the male than the female. The light is confined to four points, two of which are situated on each side of the two last rings of the abdomen. When in motion they are more luminous, and one would imagine the light to be the result of respiration. The subject has much puzzled scientists, but it is by no means an improbability that phosphoric acid is produced by the union of oxygen gas with some portion of the blood, and by this slow internal combustion the beautiful light is emitted through the transparent bodies. When at rest there is little light produced by the insects, and by contraction luminosity is withdrawn. The light is merely a spark, but it is a thing of beauty. Greenish gold in tint, it shines with a brilliant lustre amongst the shadows of the summer foliage, and is an enchanting contrast to the dark foliage of the hedges and woods as seen by the faint illumination of the starlit sky.

The great fire-fly—elater noctilucus—is an inhabitant of the savannahs of most of the warmer parts of America and the West India Islands. It is said to attain a length of an inch and a half. In the gloom of night these flies are extremely luminous, and the effect is brilliant. The light chiefly proceeds from four parts—viz., from two glandular spots behind the eyes, and one under each wing. They have the power to cut off the light at will, in which case the glandular spots become perfectly opaque. The light of this wonderful insect by itself is such that if the creature be held in the palm of the hand, print or manuscript is as easily read as by a candle. The aboriginal natives cage these creatures and make use of them, it is alleged, as lanterns. Ladies adorn themselves with this electric-like luminary. It is related of Don Domingo Condé, of Columbia, that he would appear on the evening promenade with a large fire-fly ornamenting the buckle of his broad hat, while a band of smaller luminous insects surrounded it. The same Spaniard lighted his palace with fire-flies in silver cages. The display must have been enchanting, for at one time the light is ruddy, at another the tinge is greenish; then there is a change to golden yellow. It is stated that when the Spaniards were about to land one of their expeditions against Mexico, a panic was caused by these luminaries. The host of flitting lights on land was supposed to be an indication of the enemy arousing their camp to resist the attack. When the English were attacking the West India Islands, the fire-flies were taken to be a Spanish army advancing with burning matches against them, and the upshot was a hasty retreat to the ships.

The great lantern-fly—Fulgora lanternaria—is the most brilliant of light-imparting insects. It is very common in various parts of South America, and is described by Madame Merian in her superb work on the insects of Surinam. To travellers by night the great lantern-fly is greatly valued, for when they place one or more of the insects on their staff they are able to continue their journeys with greater ease than they would do with a torch. There are three species of beetle of the genus elater, which have the property of emitting light. The night-shining nereis yields a brilliant light, and in its natural size is only a quarter of an inch. This animal was discovered by Vianelli. They inhabit every sea, and may be seen on marine plants, or swimming on the surface of the water. At every season of the year they are frequent, especially in summer time, and are more luminous the more boisterous the sea. Myriads may be seen in a small cup of sea-water, and as they lodge themselves in the cavities of the scales of fishes, to this fact undoubtedly most fishes are indebted for

their luminosity. When the wind is in the east and south-east, and in winter nights preceding a warm day, they are especially brilliant. If they be placed in warm water after they are dead, they will retain their luminosity two days, but during cold they lose it in the course of seven or eight hours.

The beroe fulgens was discovered by Macartney. The cancer fulgens was discovered by Sir J. P. Banks during his voyage with Captain Cook in the passage from Madeira to Rio de Janeiro. The whole of the body was illuminated and emitted brilliant flashes of light. The simulus noctilucus was discovered by Captain Horsburg. Many species of medusæ exhibit a strong light; the most splendid of these with which we are acquainted is the pellucens, which was taken from the sea, at the same time with the cancer fulgens, by Sir Joseph Banks. The medusa pellucens emits flashes of light during the process of contraction, and is so vivid as to affect the spectator's sight. When the water in which these creatures and the cancer fulgens were contained was emptied out of a bucket, it was likened to a running stream of fire or fused gold.

Spallanzani discovered a medusa in the Straits of Messina, which he describes as being exceedingly luminous; he says it blazes like a torch and is visible thirty-five feet under the surface of the water. Its light, however, is variable; sometimes it continues for a quarter of an hour, and even longer, at others it becomes suddenly extinct and reappears after a considerable interval. He accounts for this cessation by supposing that it is while the animal is at perfect rest. We must remark that the above striking appearance has not been recorded since the time of Spallanzani.

The marine insects at sea make a splendid sight. At one time, the evening serene and beautiful, a pleasant breeze just filling the sails and the bow of the vessel just throwing the water to each side, as it gracefully parts the yielding waves, all around the ship, far as the eye can reach, may be seen innumerable bright spots of light rising to the surface, and again disappearing, like a host of small stars dancing and sparkling on the bosom of the sea. At another time, the night dark and lowering, a fresh breeze urging the ship rapidly onwards through her pathless track, upon looking over the stern, in addition to the smaller specks just now mentioned, large globes of living fire may be seen wheeling and dancing in the smooth water in the wake of the rudder, now at a great depth shining through the water, then rising rapidly to the surface, they may be seen as they reach the top of the wave, flashing a bright spark of light sufficient almost to dazzle the eyes of the beholder; and now, again, they may be traced floating majestically along, till they gradually disappear in the darkness of the water in the distance. At other times, again, when light rain is falling, or perhaps previously to the rain coming on, when a light nimbose cloud is overspreading the sky, upon the water being agitated by the ship passing through it, or curled up by a rope towing overboard in a bight, a beautiful general luminousness diffusing all around, bright enough to illuminate the whole ship's side, and the lower large sails which may be set at the time; and it is no unusual occurrence to have this appearance so bright that a person, with little difficulty, and near the surface of the water, might be enabled to read. This magnificent spectacle in the ocean at night is due to the remarkable property of phosphorescence. It may be here stated that luminous life is not confined to the animal kingdom. Many lowly plants of the fungus tribe find their nourishment in decaying wood. The luminosity belongs to the life of the fungus, not to the death of the wood. A daughter of Linnæus, as darkness was approaching, observed a spark or gleam of light amongst yellow nasturtiums, to which remarkable phenomenon she directed her father's notice, but the distinguished naturalist was totally unable to explain the cause. Botanists have observed the same luminous appearance with other flowers, such as marigolds. The light is momentary, and has not the steady gleam of insects and fungi.

There is no rational being who has, for the first time, lifted his eyes to the nocturnal sky and beheld the moon walking in brightness amidst the planetary orbs and the host of stars, but must have been struck with admiration and wonder at the splendid scene. The potency of lunar influence in worldly matters was at one time almost universally acknowledged, and even now many of the errors and superstitions connected with the moon still firmly hold their ground amongst many people. It is still, for instance, commonly supposed, as it was in the days of the Romans, that the violence of madness increases with the moon, and decreases as the latter is waning, the worst paroxysms occurring when the planet is at the full.

It used to be thought unlucky to see the new moon for the first time through glass, and it was believed that if the new moon made its appearance on the Saturday, there would be bad weather for a month after, hence the following saying, "A Saturday moon, if it comes once in seven years, comes once too soon." Some savages imagine that a fresh moon is created every month, and it may possibly have been a somewhat similar idea that had caused the new moon to become the subject of the numerous customs and superstitious fancies with which one frequently meets. When the moon is on its back, that is to say with the horns of the crescent pointing upwards, it is thought by some to indicate frost. Sharp horns of the new moon are supposed to presage wind, and when the outline of the entire planet could be traced, it was in Scotland looked upon as a sign of bad weather.

The Dakota Indians think that the moon at its waning is eaten by little mice. The Hottentots say that it wanes when, suffering from a headache, it puts its hand to its forehead and hides the latter from our view. The Esquimaux imagine that the moon, harassed by fatigue and hunger after finishing its journey, retires for a moment to take rest and food. Its apparent corpulence after its reappearance shows with what avidity it has fed. The Esthonians shake off by throwing it upon the moon every calamity which may befall them for a month to come, and with this intent they address the new moon: "Hail to thee, new moon; let me be young and thou old, let mine eyes be clear and thine dim, let me be light as a bird and thou heavy as iron." There is a whole list of black days in their calendar.

"The Man in the Moon" is the name popularly given to the dark spots and lines upon the surface of the moon which are visible to the naked eye, and which, when examined with a powerful telescope, are discovered to be the shadow of mountains in that luminary. The best existing map of the moon shows thirty-two thousand eight hundred and fifty-six crater-shaped projections, according to Monsieur Wilhelm Meyer, and astronomers tell us that one hundred thousand are brought into view with a telescope of medium power. It is not probable that these so-called craters have all been eruptive volcanoes, for the size of some of them is opposed to this assumption no less than their great number. The crater Copernicus, perhaps the most beautiful of all, is a circular wall about fifty-four miles in diameter, rising in one place almost perpendicularly to thirteen thousand feet. Its origin has not been satisfactorily explained. On the other hand, the system of radiations about the crater Tycho, covering half the moon's surface, may well be regarded as the effect of the cooling and contraction of the moon from a molten state. It is one of the most popular, and perhaps one of the most ancient superstitions in the world, that the spots and lines on the moon are the figure of a man leaning on a fork, on which he carries a bundle of thorns or brushwood, for stealing which on a Sunday he was confined in the moon. The Biblical account given in the fifteenth chapter of Numbers, thirty-second to thirty-seventh verses, of a man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks upon the Sabbath, is undoubtedly the origin of this belief. But even in the old times there was a glimmer of truth in some of the moon stories. Thus, in Norway there was a notion that the marks represented a great giant, and that this giant had charge of our tides. It was said that when the giant bent down the water began to come in over the sands, and that when he rose up it began to flow out; and, moreover, there was the idea that the giant was so very big that it took him some time to stoop down and straighten up again, the consequence being that he only managed to get through this feat twice a day, and even then it had to be done very slowly. Here we have what we call science hidden away in a fairy tale. But while this tradition has been found in Norway, the peasants in the neighbouring country, Sweden, place a boy and girl in the moon instead of a giant, and they say that the moon stole the boy and girl when carrying water home for their mother, "and there the boy and girl are to this day," they will say, pointing to the moon, "carrying the pail between them." On the other hand, there are parts of Germany where the marks are supposed to represent a woman, and the story there is that the man carries a bundle of briars on his back, and the woman a butter-tub, because the one strewed thorns in the way of church-goers on a Sunday, and the other made butter on that day The natives of the island of Ceylon say that the figure in the moon is that of a hare.

Of all the thousands of stars that have been studied, astronomers know the distances of about twenty, and even these are known only approximately, being the supposed distances within which they cannot be, but

beyond which they must be, though the exact limits cannot at present be determined, owing to the immense intervals which separate them from our earth. The nearest star is so remote that its light requires three and a half years to reach us, while the light of the polar star is forty-five years in arriving to us from that distant and prominent orb; so that if the light of this star was suddenly extinguished to-day, nearly half a century would have to elapse before we should be aware of the fact, and miss the familiar orb from its place in the heavens. There are some stars so remote that their light, though travelling with a velocity of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second, cannot reach us in less than ten thousand years. To traverse the Milky Way, of which our solar system forms a part, light requires fifteen thousand years; and to reach us from one of the distant nebulæ, which appear like faint clouds and are hardly visible through the largest telescope, it must travel for three hundred times that period, or nearly five million years. To ordinary vision, all the stars appear at rest in the heavens, nor can the astronomer himself recognise any signs of motion, except by patient and long-continued observation, extending, in some instances, over a period of many years, and even centuries, when succeeding astronomers complete the work which their predecessors began. But every star in the firmament is moving through space with wonderful velocity. Absolute rest is unknown in the universe. If we look up to the sky on a calm, bright night when the stars shine in all their glory, we are usually impressed with the feeling that a solemn stillness reigns throughout those infinite regions of space. In reality, those amazing star depths above us, which appear so steadfast and unchangeable from year to year, are astir with life, energy, and activity, and there is a remarkable process of change taking place all around us. Our own earth is moving with us constantly and rapidly in its orbit eighteen miles per second, or with nearly every beat of the pulse. This is our velocity as reported by the astronomers, and while we sleep seven hours at night the world carries us four hundred and seventy thousand miles through space. Some stars are known to be approaching, and others receding from the earth. Amongst those found to be approaching is Arcturus—mentioned in the Bible, and the brightest star north of the equator — which is moving with a velocity of fifty-five miles every second. Sirius, the "Dog Star," and "King of Suns," so glorious on winter evenings, and the brightest star in all the heavens, is receding from us at the rate of twenty-six miles a second, and yet, with these enormous velocities, the passage of a thousand years will make no perceptible difference in the appearance of these two stars, so immense are the distances which separate them from the earth. The greatest velocity that has been recognised amongst the stars is found in the motion of a star known as 1830 Groombridge, or the "runaway star" as it is sometimes called, which is believed to be rushing through space at the rate of two hundred miles per second. This star appears to be moving in a perfectly straight line through the sky, and it may be visiting our star system for the first time, but whence it came, or whither it is going, no one can tell, and it is a great enigma to astronomers. Its wonderful velocity cannot be explained, as it is far greater than could be produced by the influence of all known orbs in the universe, and on the other hand the combined attraction of all the stars cannot stop this wanderer in its solitary flight through space until it has rushed on to the remoter distances, beyond which the largest telescopes have never penetrated. It has been mathematically demonstrated that a body approaching the centre of our system from an infinite distance, cannot move with a greater velocity than twenty-five miles a second if influenced by the attraction of the masses in our universe alone; but here we have been considering a star moving with eight times that velocity, and still, notwithstanding the fact that it has the greatest motion known among the stars, it would require one hundred and eighty-five thousand years for this remarkable star to complete an entire circuit around the heavens. One of the most notable examples of the constant and yet almost imperceptible changes taking place in the firmament is to be found in the motions of the seven bright stars forming the well-known "Big Dipper" in the constellation Ursa Major. Professor Huggins has learned that five of these stars are moving in the same direction through the heavens, which seems to indicate that they are associated with each other in some mysterious way at present unknown to astronomers. After a long continued and careful study of the motions of all the stars in the "Big Dipper," Professor Flammarion, a distinguished French astrono-

mer, has been able to represent the outlines formed by them in the past, and those which they will form in the distant future. One hundred thousand years ago, according to his ingenious calculations, the stars now forming the "Big Dipper" were then arranged in the outline of a large and irregular-shaped cross, and one hundred thousand years hence they will assume the outline of an elongated and inverted "Dipper"—very different from the one we now see, which stretches over a large extent of sky. Our entire universe of stars is constantly undergoing vast changes. The configuration of our starry heavens will eventually be greatly changed from their present appearance. Orion, so beautiful and attractive during the winter season, will then no longer hold supremacy over the constellations. The notions hitherto held concerning the stars and the firmament are destined to undergo a complete revolution. There are no fixed stars in the heavens; each one of those distant suns, shining in the immensity of space, is swept along in a movement so rapid that the human mind can scarcely conceive it, and before many years have elapsed there will be recognised amongst the stars a variety of constitution and a complexity of arrangement strictly contrasted with the general uniformity of structure at present taught in most of our text-books on astronomy.

A NEW FOOD-MATERIAL.

THAT the coloured races live very much on the cocoa-nut is well enough known, but it will doubtless be a surprise to many people to learn that a very much smaller nut—also of tropical growth—is about to enter largely into the food of the white races. At all events, if the experiments which are now being conducted in Germany, and with highly successful results so far, turn out as expected, the world will have found a new food and a new industry of very considerable interest. Peanut-meal is now being used in the German army and navy, and peanut-oil and oil-cake are already well-established articles of trade in Germany.

What, then, is the peanut? It is the same as what is sometimes called the earth-nut, and sometimes the ground-nut. It belongs to the genus Arachis, which have papilionaceous flowers, and have the singular habit of ripening their fruit underground. The peanut of commerce is the seed vessel and seed of Arachis hypagæa, which flourishes in the West Indies and Brazil, but most abundantly in East and West Africa and India. It is very rich in oil, as the French found out long ago, and large quantities are annually brought from Western Africa to Southern France, where the oil is expressed and used to mix with, or as a substitute for, genuine olive oil. That the oil is nutritious and wholesome enough is not to be doubted, but certainly, as thus manipulated, it is not what it seems.

Many years ago the author of "The Chemistry of Common Life" indicated the ground-nut as a probable, or actual, substitute for cocoa—or roasted, ground, and prepared in the same way as chocolate. He mentioned that in Spain the earth-chestnut was even then being consumed as a substitute for coffee. The quality of peanuts, however, varies much more than might be supposed. The poorest are found on the Madras coast, and the best in the region of the Senegal in West Africa, and it is, apparently, only since they began to develope an interest in Africa that the Germans have discovered the food-value of this humble product.

In 1893 upwards of twenty thousand tons of peanuts were imported into Germany, of which eight thousand five hundred tons came from West Africa, five thousand five hundred tons from East Africa, and the rest from the East Indies. For the manipulation of the peanut there are now twenty-seven factories constantly employed at Hamburg, Mannheim, Heilbronn, and elsewhere.

The imports from West Africa are in the shell, which, while making them more bulky and adding to the freight, has compensating advantages. For instance, the nut is apt to be crushed or injured when shipped without the husk, and also to become strong, if not rancid, in flavour by exposure.

The husks make up about twenty-five per cent. of the weight of a shipment, but are not all loss, even when their protective functions are over, for in Germany they are used in rough paper-making, and also, when ground up, as food for cattle. From West Africa and India the nuts are usually imported without the shells—the reason doubtless being to secure cheaper freight.

When the nuts reach the factories, or oil-mills, the seeds are subjected to three successive pressings with very great force. At the first pressing about forty per cent. of the oil is expressed, at the second four per cent., and at the third from two to

three per cent. The oil thus obtained is valued chiefly for culinary purposes, and in Germany is now largely consumed as salad oil. It is much cheaper than the best qualities of olive oil, ranging from three shillings to four shillings per gallon wholesale. The East Indian nuts, however, yield an inferior oil, which is not used for the table but is sold to the soap-makers, and also—it is said—to the makers of oleomargarine.

After as much oil as possible has, by cold pressure, been extracted from the seeds, there is still a large percentage remaining in the oil-cake. This cake has been, until recently, used only for horse and cattle food, selling at from six pounds to seven pounds per ton. It has proved an excellent food for animals, but best adapted for the winter, as it is rich and heating, and apt to cause excessive perspiration in the animals in warm weather. The richness necessarily varies with the quality of the nut, and the following is, approximately, the yield of oil of the different sorts: Senegambia peanuts, fifty-one per cent.; Congo and East African, forty-nine per cent.; American, forty-two per cent.; Behar, forty-four per cent.; and Madras peanuts, forty-three per cent.

The richness of the oil-cake in nitrogenous matter attracted the attention of German scientists, and about a couple of years ago Professor Nördlinger of Bockenheim began a series of experiments with peanut-meal, to test its adaptability as food, not only for army and navy rations, but also for the relief of the poorer classes of the peasantry and labourers, whose usual diet of bread and potatoes is too deficient in nitrogenous elements. What Dr. Nördlinger set himself to face was the conversion of the waste product of the peanut-oil factories into a nutritious, wholesome, and, if possible, palatable form of food at a lower cost than is supplied in any other form, measured by the equivalents in nutrition.

A Food Product Factory was established at Frankfort, and there, by processes devised by Dr. Nördlinger, are now being manufactured four different preparations of peanut food. There is, first, "Erdnussgrütze," or peanut grits, a coarse meal, dried and purified, intended for use in soups and cakes, and also cooked as purée. Second, "Erdnussmehl," or peanut flour, somewhat like the "grits," only ground and made like ordinary flour. Next there is peanut biscuit, dry and light, and said to be very palatable, and lastly are produced "Diabetic Chocolate Biscuits."

For more than a year past these various preparations have been in the market, and have been thoroughly tested both by the public and the Faculty. They have been thoroughly discussed by the Berlin Medical Society; and, at the instance of that Society, Professor Führbringer has been subjecting them to prolonged and careful tests in the Friedenshein Public Hospital at Berlin, with the object of appraising the value of peanut food for invalids.

Dr. Führbringer reports that he caused peanut grits and flour to be prepared in various forms, and supplied to one hundred and twenty inmates of this hospital — men, women, and children — suffering from a variety of complaints. This is the doctor's report concerning the soup made from peanut grits: "It resembles our ordinary oatmeal soup, and is similar in taste to the same, except that there is a slightly bitter and astringent taste noticeable. At the present time we have dispensed six hundred portions of this soup to about one hundred and twenty men, women, and children, the plate containing about twenty-five to forty-five grains of the rough-ground grits, on the average sixteen grains of albumen, with an approximate nourishing capacity, therefore, of about one hundred grains of meat, or two eggs, or one-third of a litre of milk. For weeks about half this number gladly ate this soup daily, and found it to agree with them, and it is especially noteworthy that among this category were several who were suffering from dyspepsia, and two cachectic patients, with abdominal and intestinal carcinoma. Nearly the other half found the soup tolerable, and the remainder—about one dozen persons in good health or with disorders of the stomach, being about one-tenth of the entire number, and chiefly females—found it offensive."

From these results it would appear that peanut soup does not, any more than turtle soup, please the palates of everybody, but that the proportion to whom it was disagreeable and non-nutritious, in a mixed company of all ages and both sexes, was about ten per cent. The children especially are said to have taken to it kindly.

Dr. Führbringer does not pretend that his peanut soup is a delicacy. What has chiefly awakened and sustained his interest is the use of the preparation as a nutriment for the sick, especially as a food for the mass of people in hospitals. "For such a purpose,"

he says, "I can with conscientiousness recommend the peanut soup made from the finer raw material—it is also to be hoped that even better forms will be discovered—as a strengthening, well assimilative, uncommonly cheap article of food. On the average it agrees with persons, and when partaken after intervals of interruption is generally liked. It is to be especially valued as a part of the diet of those suffering with diabetes or corpulency. How acceptable to this class is any new article of food that may be added to their restricted menu! For those ailing with Bright's disease and chronic kidney disorders, where the consumption of too much animal albumen is questionable, it is also most welcome."

Such are the medical aspects of peanut soup, but before the Berlin Medical Society were lately submitted peanut baking-flour, made according to Dr. Nördlinger's process, and most palatable biscuits made from it and a mixture of wheat-flour; as also macaroons made with peanut, instead of almond, preparations. It is said that these biscuits are finding large favour in Berlin, and that in many households there the peanut grits are being constantly used in purées, etc. The latest appearance of the peanut is roasted and ground as a substitute for coffee; the flavour is strong, but is liked by many people.

According to this comparison, peanut-meal is by far the most nutritious and the most cheap of all the articles on the list of food materials. A pound of peanut-meal costs, wholesale, in Germany about twopence, and by the analysis of Professor König, it is found to contain 47·26 per cent. of nitrogenous elements, 19·37 per cent. oil matter, 19·06 per cent. non-nitrogenous elements, and 3,134 units of nutrition per kilogramme of bulk. It contains, therefore, nearly twice the amount of nutrition of pease and beans at something like one-third less cost, weight for weight.

In conclusion, we may state that the subject of peanut rations is being very carefully considered and thoroughly investigated by the German military authorities. In a number of the garrisons the men have for some time past been served with peanut soup, and the results noted in official reports regularly forwarded to the Ministry of War at Berlin for classification and comparison. It is announced that the first series of experiments have proved "quite satisfactory," and that a second series of trials has been ordered to make further tests of certain properties of the food. The general belief is that peanut grits and flour will soon be officially added to the garrison rations of the German army and the diet of the German navy, with advantage to the health of the men and relief to the Imperial exchequer.

OCTOBER.

THE tints you loved on the full foliaged trees,
That bear the crown of burgeoned branches still,
Sweeping from the broad summit of the hill,
To the cliffs' margin, high above the seas;
But when, before the rushing western breeze,
The mighty branches sway and toss about,
Russet, and brown, and gold flash gleaming out:
October's touch is on the woods and leas.
The sound you loved is in the tempest's roar,
The scent you loved breathes from the dying flowers,
The "call" you loved is on the hollow shore,
And through the silent grey autumnal hours,
I, cherishing each little word you said,
Hail the old charm they bring me, with my dead.

THE WIZARD'S CROSS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

THE broad white road sweeps downwards in long curves round the hillsides towards the valley, in which the little provincial town of St. Zite lies well out of the way of the rest of the world. On the government maps of the Department this road is called the "route de Toulouse;" but about Toulouse, which lies fifty long leagues to the southward, the inhabitants of St. Zite know little and care less. To them the road is, and always has been, the "route de St. Antoine," in honour of the monastery and chapel which stand overlooking it from a rocky eminence about a mile out of the town. In former times the monastery was of considerable importance, and the Abbot held his own among the magnates of the province; but in these degenerate days, which have witnessed the expulsion of nearly all the religious bodies from France, few people can remember St. Antoine as anything but a great deserted barrack, where one solitary monk lives as farmer of the lands which still belong to his order.

One of those whose memory stretches back the farthest is old Martin Neyrac, the garde champêtre, who is also landlord of the inn "Au bon St. Antoine," which stands at the junction of the path to the monastery with the high-road. The père Neyrac is a garrulous old man, and the former glories of St. Antoine are not likely to pass from remembrance as long as he lives to recall them. A single question unlocks his hoard of reminiscences, and unless one wishes to

be absolutely uncivil to him, one must compose oneself to listen until he is weary of talking.

And I had asked him a question as I sat in front of his inn with him, drinking a bottle of the best little wine of the country. I had mentioned a cross on the hillside behind the inn—a stone cross with an illegible inscription, at whose foot grew some red and white roses.

"Tiens!" cried le père Neyrac, "is it possible that monsieur does not know the story of the Croix du Sorcier?"

"No," I replied, "I did not even know that among your legends you had such a treasure as a wizard."

"It is not a legend, monsieur," said the old man earnestly, "it is all plain fact—facts which happened under my very own eyes; and as to his being a wizard—well, that was only a 'façon de parler.' He was no more a wizard than you or I, though he did wonderful things which made people call him so. However, I had better begin at the beginning, for it is a story worth hearing."

Now, when the père Neyrac decided to begin at the beginning, one knew that the end was a fairly long way off. Experience, however, had taught me that to listen patiently generally brought its own reward, so I filled up both our glasses, and he began:

"It happened fifty years ago, monsieur, and fifty years ago things were very different from what they are now. The monastery was full of monks, and the little chapel up yonder was the favourite pilgrimage between Limoges and Toulouse. Lourdes and Rocamadour have put it out of fashion now, but I can remember the time when pilgrims at St. Antoine were as plentiful as flies in August; and when pilgrims were plentiful this inn drove a rattling good trade, and the landlord, François Savariaud, was a well-to-do man. Savariaud's father and grandfather had kept the inn before him, as tenants of the reverend fathers; but Savariaud's son was not likely to succeed him: he had other views, and his father was quite as well pleased—perhaps better than if young François had been going to stand in his shoes one day.

"François Savariaud was about my age, and what bit of learning I have I got along with him at the school which the monks used to keep for the benefit of the children of the neighbourhood. I never took much to reading and writing, and as soon as I had made my first communion, I left school and began to earn a bit of a living as odd boy at the inn; while François, who was the favourite pupil of the monks, kept to his books. He was a queer sort of lad, with a dreamy face, and dark eyes set far back in his head, and a thin, determined mouth which scarcely ever smiled or uttered a merry word. He did not care for play, and he had no friends of his own age. He seemed to care for nothing and no one but the monks, his books, and the church services; so we gave him the nickname of the 'Abbot,' and every one felt sure he would either study for the priesthood or take the vows of a monk. His teachers were very proud of him, they held him up as a model to all the school, and in private, I expect, they worked on his enthusiasm and encouraged the bent of his mind. Anyhow, when he was about seventeen he went away to Clermont to the seminary, and Savariaud and his wife used to tell every one that the Abbot had insisted on their son's studying to be a missionary in the East. No one regretted his going, for, as I said, he had no friends; and his father and mother, who were very devout people, were delighted with the step he had taken. So the year slipped by, and he only came home once or twice for a few days. He seemed, indeed, to have passed out of our ken altogether. But in the last summer before his public profession and ordination the Father Superior of the seminary ordered him to spend the long vacation at home, and to rest—because he had been studying so hard, and living so rigorously, that he was on the point of breaking down. So he came—though, as events turned out, it would have been far better for him to have worked himself into his grave than to have taken that holiday.

"He had not changed much during his five years' absence, although his face was paler and thinner, his eyes more sunken and mysterious, his lips narrower and more inflexible. And he was no more genial than of old; he used to ramble all day on the hills with a book in his hand and a rosary hanging from his fingers. He looked more like a shadow than a creature of flesh and blood. And yet one day he surprised himself and every one else by the discovery that after all he was but as other men are, and that his human passions had survived all the penances and severities with which he had thought to destroy them.

"You understand, monsieur. He fell in love. The protégé of the monks, the ascetic student, the invincible soldier of the Church,

fell in love, as madly and as deeply as the most giddy-pated of us might have done—or rather more madly and more deeply, because it was his nature to exaggerate his emotions, and because his nature had been so long perverted and repressed.

"Perhaps it was no wonder that he fell a victim to Berthe Mazière. Half the lads in the place were in love with her, without her seeming to raise a finger to make a conquest of any one; and though she had not a penny of dowry, she might have married just whom she pleased. She made no choice, however, but teased all her lovers alike, until the unlucky day when, after I had persuaded him to go down to market with me, François Savariaud saw her sitting beside a pile of melons which she had brought to sell.

"'Who is she, Martin?' he asked me eagerly, as I greeted her in passing. I told him she was my cousin Berthe Mazière, and soon after I saw that he had turned back and was buying a melon from her. What was he thinking of? His father's vineyard yielded the best melons in the neighbourhood. Then I noticed the look on his face as Berthe smiled at him, and it amused me to think of the stern young neophyte unbending for a moment to joke with my pretty cousin. Before long, however, we all knew that it was no joke, nor just a moment's pastime; for, forgetting all his past resolutions and all the future for which he had been training so arduously, François began to woo Berthe Mazière in serious earnest, and stranger still, Berthe, who had tossed her pretty head at the handsomest and bravest lads of St. Zite, listened to him and gave him every encouragement. It seemed as if the very strangeness and unexpectedness of his wooing fascinated her. François made no secret of his courtship. It did not seem to enter his mind that any one would blame or oppose it. He went every day to La Pigeonnie on the opposite side of the valley, where Berthe lived with her parents; and every one who chose could see him working with her in her father's bit of vineyard, or sitting beside her while she minded the goats on the hillside. Plain as it was, however, and much as people were talking of it, François's parents seemed to know nothing about it, until one fine day he came home and informed them that Berthe Mazière had consented to be his wife, and that he had given up the idea of being a missionary.

The news came on them like a thunderclap, and at first they refused to believe it. It was impossible, they said, after the monks had done so much for him that he would change his purpose in life. To that he replied that if he had in his inexperience mistaken his vocation, it was a good thing he had found it out before he had taken any irrevocable step. This, however, was but one of the objections his parents raised. They were very avaricious. Berthe had not a sou. They were devout Catholics, and the père Mazière was an avowed freethinker. But François had his answers ready. He could qualify, he said, as a schoolmaster, and earn sufficient to be independent of his parents before he married; and as to the freethinking, he had convinced Berthe of the error of that, and she had been to mass regularly for weeks.

"The Abbot, however, would not listen to reasoning of this sort. He maintained that an irrevocable step had been taken when François, after his first communion, had vowed to devote his life to the service of the Church, and that an alliance with atheists would only make his apostasy the blacker; and then by all the threats of all the punishments in his power he tried to bring his former pupil back to the allegiance from which he had swerved.

"François was, as I have said, no friend of mine, but in those days I felt truly sorry for him. It was dreadful to see the conflict which went on in him between the great love which had suddenly filled his heart, and the fears which the Father Abbot soon succeeded in raising up in his conscience. All the while, too, he had to bear his parents' reproaches, who lived in dread that the monks would turn them out of the house which had been their home for generations. Still he would not give in—not even when the Abbot excommunicated him solemnly after mass on the Feast of the Assumption. If, however, his will held good, his body and mind were unable to stand the strain of the constant struggle in which he was engaged. Before the end of the long holidays he was worn to a shadow of his former self. He could not eat, or sleep, or rest, his dark eyes burnt like fires in his bloodless face. His strength broke down utterly, and he could no longer drag his weary limbs up to La Pigeonnie.

"Of course Madame Savariaud forbade Berthe to enter her house, so the lovers used to meet sometimes on the hillside, under the pine-tree where the Croix du Sorcier now stands; at other times it fell to my lot to be the messenger between

them, though in my heart I hated the thought of my pretty cousin giving up all that she might have had to a love which could never make her truly happy. But her one word was that François was free to marry if he chose, and she bore her share of the trouble bravely, though his failing health troubled her sorely. What would be the end of it? Would he die? Was there no remedy? She thought of many things, and one day, as a last resource, she went to burn a taper in the chapel yonder, and to pray that François might recover from his strange illness. It is quite impossible to say what the end of her story would have been if she had not gone to burn that taper.

"She told me all about it afterwards; how she was so deeply absorbed with her own thoughts as she entered the chapel that she did not notice whether or no it was empty, and how she went straight to the altar, adjusted her taper, lighted it, and, kneeling down, began to pray. When she had finished her first paternoster, she looked up, and saw that her taper had gone out. She rose, loosened the wick, relighted it, and knelt down again; but as she watched it the flame sputtered and struggled and went out again—it seemed as if the Holy Virgin to whom she was praying would none of her prayers. She persevered, however, but always with the same ill-success, till at last when, for the ninth time, her taper refused to burn, she dashed it on to the ground, and sank down weeping hysterically in front of the altar.

"'Do not cry so bitterly,' said a voice beside her, 'your candle only went out because it is badly made.'

"She looked up startled, and saw standing beside her the man whom we afterwards called the wizard. He did not look in the least like a wizard. He was a tall, well-built man of about five-and-thirty, with a kind face and large grey eyes, which seemed to look you through and through. He explained to Berthe that he had been sitting by the door as she came in, that he had been watching her, and that he understood exactly why the candle had gone out. But Berthe could not accept the explanation. It seemed all of a piece with the rest of her ill-luck that the taper she had brought to the shrine should go out in that mysterious manner; she said as much, and went on crying. Then the stranger, little by little, she could scarcely tell how, drew the story of her trouble from her, and when he had heard it he told her that even if her taper had not burnt, her visit to the shrine need not be fruitless; that he was a doctor from Paris, Jacques Reynaudie by name, that his skill lay chiefly in dealing with such cases as François's, and that he was staying in St. Zite long enough to make an attempt at least to help him. The end of it was that Berthe brought her new acquaintance down to the inn, and while he explained himself to the Savariauds, she ran round to find me in the stable where I was milking and to tell me the whole story.

"'Fancy, Martin,' she cried, when she had told it me, 'fancy, a great doctor—a real gentleman—coming and talking like that to a poor girl like me, and fancy if he cures François of his fever and sleeplessness, which I firmly believe he will. Oh, Martin, come and have a look at him, he is so handsome. I never saw any one so handsome.'

"My pail of milk was ready to carry to the house, so I went nothing loth to see this monsieur about whom she was so excited.' But as I reached the threshold of the houseplace I stood still, and so did Berthe; for what we saw was quite beyond our experience or our comprehension. There sat François in the corner of the settle, leaning back in an attitude of repose, while the strange doctor stood in front of him holding his hands and gazing fixedly into his eyes. Le père Savariaud and his wife stood near the window with astonished faces. No one was moving, and the only sounds in the kitchen were the ticking of the clock and the buzzing of the flies. I knew but little of doctors, still I felt that this doctor with his calm, masterful face was something quite out of the common. The minutes slipped on; still nothing moved, and no one spoke; the doctor never turned his eyes from those of François. I began to feel quite uncanny. Then all at once I saw that an extraordinary change had come over François's face. He had not looked so peaceful and untroubled for many a day. The emotion, the mental anguish which had tortured him so long seemed to have burned themselves out, the calm restfulness of the stranger seemed to be taking possession of him. He was leaning his head tranquilly against the back of the settle, every nervous movement stilled, while his eyelids drooped softly over his eyes. He raised them once or twice, and then——was it possible? He was asleep, asleep as a child lulled by its mother's cradle song.

"Then the stranger looked round. His face was pale, and beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

"'So far so good,' he said, smiling at Berthe. 'Now some one come and help me carry him to his bed. You need not be afraid of waking him; he will sleep till to-morrow.'

"'What have you done to him?' asked le père Savariaud angrily, as he obeyed. 'It is not natural to send a man to sleep like that by looking into his eyes. You are a sorcerer.'

"'Don't call bad names, mon brave,' said the stranger, laughing, 'and keep your displeasure for those who deserve it,' and then he went on to explain to us that a few doctors in Paris, of whom he was one, had discovered a way of making a man sleep by influencing his will, and this, he said, was a very good remedy in cases of mental disorder, such as that of François, where the brain was becoming exhausted for want of rest. 'And now,' he added, 'I will give a few directions which must be carefully obeyed. My patient must be allowed to sleep undisturbed till I come to rouse him to-morrow, and when he is awake all agitation must be avoided for him. For instance, it will be well, mademoiselle, that you should not see him for the present. I will take care that you have news of his progress. My cure requires three weeks. Will you allow me as long to try and effect it? I assure you that besides the gain to your son, which you can easily see and appreciate, his cure, if I bring it about, will be an extremely important step in my career.'

"So it was settled that Monsieur Reynaudie should do his best by his mysterious process to restore François to health, and Berthe went home, feeling very pleased with her afternoon's adventure.

"During the next three weeks Berthe never came near St. Antoine, nor did I happen to meet her when I was down in the town. I suppose Monsieur Reynaudie carried her all the news of François, which was certainly very wonderful news. Every evening he came to the inn, and in a shorter time every evening he cast François into the deep, dreamless sleep which we had seen settle down on him that first afternoon; and every morning François awoke, refreshed, and calmed in mind and body. His appetite returned, his nervous irritability almost disappeared, his step grew firm again, his eyes lost their wild expression, and his face regained its natural outline and colour. Every one was talking of his cure, and Monsieur Reynaudie was already famous in St. Zite under the sobriquet of the sorcerer, but the Father Abbot denounced the cure as impious. In fact, François was not likely to find his position less difficult as he recovered, and many people thought that the monks would carry the day after all. My own opinion was that François would hold out.

"The allotted three weeks was nearly over, when one day at market, I found Berthe sitting at her fruit stall, looking paler and gloomier than I had ever seen her.

"'Bon jour, Berthe,' I cried, 'what on earth is the matter? I thought I should see you radiant with happiness. Has not your strange doctor told you what good his spells have worked for François?'

"'Yes,' she replied, 'he has told me; besides, I have seen it for myself. François has been up at La Pigeonnie."

"'Then why don't you look more cheerful?' I asked.

"'For the best of reasons,' she rejoined. 'Certainly, François's visit was not calculated to make any one cheerful.'

"There were tears in her eyes as she spoke. I wondered if François had begun to weary of his strange betrothal.

"'Martin,' she began again, 'has François been talking to you lately—talking about me?'

"I shook my head.

"'I have seen but little of him lately,' I said. 'He has been so occupied with his magical cure.'

"'He has been occupied with something else,' she replied. 'He has got rid of one fever and caught another. He is mad with jealousy.'

"'Jealousy!' I exclaimed. 'And who is he jealous of?'

"'Ah!' she replied, 'that you would never guess—never!'

"'I shan't try,' I rejoined. 'I'm not good at guessing—besides, I know you've given him no reason to be jealous.'

"'Don't you be too sure, mon cousin, his eyes are sharper than yours—but whether or no we shall never be married now. I don't know why I ever promised to marry him. I suppose his wild, strange passion fascinated me. I thought I cared for him; but now it all seems false and unnatural—almost hideous. I feel as if I had come to my senses after being dizzy. I told him so; I told him it must all come to an end. You aren't sorry, Martin, I know.'

"'I'm not sorry,' I answered. 'But how did François take it? Does he consent to set you free?'

"'I don't know,' she said. 'I scarce know how he took it. My heart beat so fast as I told him, that I felt quite faint. I thought at first he was going to strike me; I shut my eyes and covered my face with my hands; when I looked up he was walking away fast. He never even looked round. And our betrothal is over and done with. And now guess of whom he is jealous.'

"'I don't think I could,' I replied, as I thought of the number of Berthe's admirers.

"She came nearer to me and lowered her voice.

'It is Monsieur Reynaudie, Martin,' she whispered. 'He declares that Monsieur Reynaudie has been making love to me. But it is not true; it is a cruel lie. Monsieur Reynaudie only kept me from going to St. Antoine so that he might succeed the better with his cure. His one idea is to complete the cure and secure the credit for this strange method of his.' Then her voice and her face took an expression I cannot possibly describe; it was so wistful and so weary. 'If he only did care for me—if he only did love me ever so little, how happy I should be! Perhaps I ought to be ashamed to say it, but I'm not. I don't care if all the world knows that I love Monsieur Reynaudie's little finger more than François's soul and body put together.'

"'Berthe!' I cried in dismay, 'my poor Berthe!'

"'You needn't pity me,' she said. 'I am free to love him. I am no longer bound to François. I shall love him for ever—even if he never speaks to me again. I told François so last night. That was when he raised his hand as if to strike me.'

"That evening François came to me at my work.

"'Martin,' he said, 'I want you to take a message up to La Pigeonnie when you go home. I want Berthe to come to our trysting place under the pine-tree to-morrow evening after sunset.' I stared at him in amazement. 'Don't you understand me?' he went on. 'To-morrow evening at dusk.'

"'I understand,' I said slowly, 'but I do not think Berthe will come. I saw her yesterday. She told me all. I think it would be better for her to stay away.'

"'But she must come,' he replied imperiously, 'she cannot refuse me this. I have a last word to say to her; I have loved her more than my soul, and I went away without a word when she had dealt me that terrible blow. I have thought it over ever since. We cannot part without any farewell. That would be too much to expect of me.'

"'And then,' I said, 'shall you go back to Clermont?'

"'To Clermont?' he repeated, 'to Clermont? How can I tell? What does it matter?' then a bitter smile came over his face; 'does she think he will marry her? Does she think that because he has made a fool of her he will make her his wife? No, Martin, the likes of him may trifle with the likes of her, but he doesn't want to marry her; and if he did, he should not. I would take care of that!'

"He looked so cruel and vindictive as he spoke that I made up my mind not to be far away from their tryst the next evening. I scarcely knew what I feared, but it seemed as if Berthe would not be safe with him alone. I turned to go, when he called me back.

"'Stay,' he said, 'here is a note for Monsieur Reynaudie; there is no answer. I suppose,' he added, more to himself than to me, 'that some people might say I am indebted to this man, but all I can say is that I had far rather have died, than that he should have come here to cure me with his spells.'

"I carried my messages, and the next evening at dusk I went down towards the town to meet Berthe, and we walked back together to St. Antoine, and then on up among the rocks to their trysting-place. Just before we came in sight of it, I sat down and Berthe went on alone. She had barely had time to reach it when her voice rang out in a piercing shriek, which echoed from hill to hill. I sprang up with trembling limbs. Why had I let her go alone? What had befallen her? Why did I hear no further sound? I scarce dare pass the last boulder which hid her from me. When I did I saw her standing with outstretched hands against the fading evening sky, while at her feet lay a man's figure motionless with uplifted face. It was not François. I could see that by the clothes. Who, then, was it?

"'Berthe!' I cried. 'Berthe, speak. What has happened?'

"Then she turned and said in a voice I hardly recognised, it was so full of horror and despair:

"'François has spoken his last word

to me, Martin. See what I have found waiting for me,' and stooping over the prostrate figure she tenderly raised the head, and in the half-light I saw the face of Jacques Reynaudie with the pallor and agony of death upon it. 'Put your hand on his heart, Martin,' she whispered. 'I dare not.'

"When I obeyed her I drew it back hastily, dripping with blood.

"The trial of François Savariaud for the murder of Dr. Jacques Reynaudie created a great sensation, not only in the neighbourhood, but all over France. Great and learned men came to his burial, and we learnt that one of the cleverest doctors of the day had been cut off at the outset of a most promising career.

"The accused made no attempt to deny the murder, nor did he offer any defence; still he was not punished according to the full rigour of the law, for the doctors, after some demur on the part of the judges, pronounced him to be of unsound mind. He died shortly afterwards in a prison for criminal lunatics. The trouble and disgrace completely broke down the poor old père Savariaud; he gave up the inn, and went to end his days somewhere where his story was not the common talk of every one.

"It was Berthe who put up the cross under the pine-tree, and who planted the rose-trees round it. She might have married later on, but she never wavered in her constancy to the love which had cost her so much; and, though she is now quite an old woman, she climbs the hill once a week to tend the flowers that grow by the Croix du Sorcier."

SOME POETIC ABSURDITIES.

THERE have been so many poetic absurdities that any orderly classification of them would be far from easy. Every age produces fresh varieties. Just at present there flourish—if the word can be used in this connection—the bards of decadence; and a melancholy, miserable, forlorn outlook on life and death is theirs. A hundred years ago the critics were laughing at the Della Cruscans, a coterie, or mutual admiration society, who wrote the most insipid and rubbishy sentimental poetry and prose, and were regarded for a short time by foolish folk as lights of literature. Their pretensions were mercilessly shattered by Gifford in his satires, the "Baviad" and the "Mæviad."

Another class of poetic absurdities may be found in the books of those versifiers who, unable to attain the honours of print in the ordinary way, are foolish enough to publish their lucubrations at their own expense, and then wait breathlessly for the applause which, in such cases, so seldom comes. Volumes of verse of this kind are often full of absurdities; but they find few purchasers, and generally drop still-born from the press. Here is a charming verse from a recent publication of this kind, whose title and author it were unkind to name:

> The hamlet's lights in the hollow,
> And the beacons above in the sky,
> Both unfold in anticipation
> Of the night that is fast drawing nigh.

But poetasters and writers of more or less metrical prose we have always with us; and sometimes, moreover, they manage to make some little noise in the world. A Tupper may run through an imposing number of editions, and a Robert Montgomery may be a popular poet, until taken in hand and thoroughly flagellated by the pen of a Macaulay. Theirs is what Fletcher long ago called:

> Unbaked poetry,
> Such as the dabblers of our time contrive,
> That has no weight nor wheel to move the mind,
> Nor indeed nothing but an empty sound.

Another melancholy collection of poetic absurdities may be found in the birthday odes and other "poems" written to order by the laureates of past times. The regular manufacture of these Court poems ceased when Southey wore the bays; but in the time of his predecessors, Whitehead and Pye—could any man bearing the name of Pye possibly be a poet?—the Royal birthday odes, and other barrel-organ productions of the courtly muse, reached their lowest depths. Poems specially commissioned or written to order rarely attain any great success. Even Tennyson, in his official welcomes to the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of Edinburgh, did not add to his fame. An exception may be made, perhaps, in favour of his Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington; but this was a subject which might well have inspired even an inferior bard to strains of deathless song.

The late laureate wrote:

> I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing;

and the assertion in his case needs no justification. But other men have professed to feel this compulsion, and have continued

"singing" and "singing" year after year, through many volumes, without any justification at all; for no ears but their own have been able to catch the music of their song. A famous producer of these volumes of poetic absurdities was Sir Richard Blackmore, bard and physician, who flourished in the days of Queen Anne. His contemporaries ridiculed him, but he continued to reel off epics as easily and as rapidly as a more genuine poet might write lyrics. Moore wrote of him:

'Twas in his carriage the sublime
Sir Richard Blackmore used to rhyme,
And (if the wits don't do him wrong)
'Twixt death and epics passed his time,
Scribbling and killing all day long.

His epics were "Prince Arthur," "The Creation," "King Alfred," and others, all now completely forgotten. Cowper said that he wrote "more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country"; and Gay, in some verses "to be placed under the picture of Sir Richard Blackmore, England's arch poet," made great fun of the poet and all his works.

But perhaps the most abundant supply of poetic absurdities may be found in the monstrous productions, miscalled poems, which it was fashionable, two centuries and more ago, to write in all kinds of strange shapes, and in the almost equally absurd anagrams, acrostics, and echo verses, which for a time were just as popular. With regard to the latter, Butler, of Hudibrastic fame, well described "a small poet" as "tumbling through the hoop of an anagram," and "all those gambols of wit." Such performances might be good clowning, but they were not poetry. The same wit thus maliciously ridicules the wailings of Echo:

In small poets' splay-foot rhymes,
That make her in their rueful stories.
To answer int'rogatories,
And most unconscionably depose
Things of which she nothing knows;
And when she has said all she can say
'Tis wrested to the lover's fancy.
Quoth he, O whither, wicked Bruin,
Art thou fled to my—Echo, Ruin?

Echo verses were sometimes used effectively for epigrams and squibs. Thus a critic once wrote:

I'd fain praise your poem—but tell me, how is it
When I cry out "exquisite," Echo cries "Quiz it"?

And when, in 1831, Paganini was drawing crowds to the Opera House at extravagant prices, the "Sunday Times" printed the following lines:

What are they who pay three guineas
To hear a tune of Paganini's?
Echo—Pack o' ninnies!

The shaped verses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were incredibly absurd. They were written in the forms of bottles, eggs, axes, wings, altars, hearts, and similar fantastic shapes. Ben Jonson speaks of "a pair of scissors and a comb in verse." George Wither wrote a "rhomboid." Puttenham erected two poetical pillars in honour of Queen Elizabeth. Even George Herbert wrote a pair of wings! Nashe, whose satirical railings must not be taken quite literally, declared that his opponent, Gabriel Harvey, "had writ verses in all kinds; in form of a pair of gloves, a pair of spectacles, and a pair of pot-hooks." There was no need, however, to invent absurdities of this kind, for those actually produced were ridiculous enough. Such labours were what Dryden calls "Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry."

Many other equally fruitless devices might be chronicled among the follies of literature. Some ingenious scribes have produced verses in which every word of a line begins with the same letter, as in the well-known—

An Austrian army awfully arrayed
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade,

and so on through the alphabet. In other cases equal ingenuity is devoted to the systematic omission of a letter, thus producing what are known as lipogrammatic verses. A poet of this kind was once told that he might do still better if he took away all the letters from every word he had written. Then there are macaronic verses—a mixture of Latin and English, or other vulgar tongue—rhopalic verses, in which the first word is a monosyllable, the second a dissyllable, and so on; chronograms, palindromes, leonine verses, lyon verses, and other more or less absurd devices for ingenious literary trifling. The ingenuity of some of these performances almost absolves them from the charge of being poetic absurdities; but with regard to most of them, one may say with the poet—

'Tis a folly to sweat o'er a difficult trifle,
And for silly devices invention to rifle.

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART VI.

He went of course to see Miss Downing direct from the station, before even ridding himself of the stains of travel. He was a good deal annoyed to find Violet Sandys

with her. There was now a very well-received rumour in Pyncholk that Alice had broken off her engagement for the sake of Dick Freeland, and Miss Sandys had come to hear the truth of it at the fountain-head. Dick had been at the Hall one evening lately, and—and, in fact, she had just begun to think he had always liked her best, when this tiresome rumour cropped up. She had practical views of life as has been said before. She was twenty-seven, and it was fully time for marriage. She wanted to know how Dick really stood with regard to Alice à Court, before allowing him to trifle again with her plans of life, not her affections, They were a secondary matter, though she was fond enough of Dick to be happy married to him, according to modern views of marriage.

She had not, for all her business-like ideas, broached the delicate subject of Alice's engagement when Arthur Knollys came in. She had been devoting herself to the conciliating topic of Miss Downing's rheumatism, which began to make itself felt with the advance of autumn. Miss Downing fell in so eagerly with this manifest method of procrastination, that Violet was nearly convinced of the truth of that disquieting rumour when Arthur walked in. This did not look like a change of lovers, especially when, after smothering his visible annoyance at finding a third person present, and enduring a formal interchange of polite observations, he asked eagerly: "Have you heard from Alice yet, Miss Downing?"

"Not a word." But even as she spoke, the afternoon postman appeared coming up the little gravelled drive. Arthur took upon himself to rush to meet the messenger of good and evil. The women watched him from the window, infected by his excitement. He waved a letter triumphantly over his head. He almost sprang from the lawn through the French window of the drawing-room, he was so quick. And yet the letter was not for him, but for Miss Downing, though addressed in Alice's hand, and bearing Norwegian stamps and post-mark. It was a very thick letter.

No man, whose conscience bore one speck of guilt, could have watched Aunt Robina open that letter with such glad anticipation in his eyes. There was a letter and an enclosure.

Miss Downing stared resentfully at the enclosure.

"Why has she sent my letter back to me?" she asked, laying it aside while she turned to the new letter. It was extremely short. Arthur's heart sank to zero as he watched the dismay in Miss Downing's face while she read it.

"The girl is crazy," she said. "She lays all the blame on me, and yet I said nothing but what was kind and in your favour."

"What does she say, for heaven's sake?" cried Arthur, agonised with disappointment.

"See for yourself," was the brief reply. "It is all Millicent Kinnaird's doing. She always tries all she can to make Alice hate me."

Arthur read the written words: so cruel, but nevertheless bringing so much joy to him, because her voice was in them. It was not his fault, then, but Mrs. Kinnaird's or Miss Downing's, and this was her dear handwriting, and her address was at the top, and he could fly thither at once, be it at the North Pole, and he would tell her she had been deceived, and that he loved her—only herself in all the world.

"DEAREST AUNTIE,—I have nothing to explain. I think a glance at the enclosed will explain everything. After receiving such a letter, how can I possibly change my mind?—Yours, ALICE."

"What on earth did you say?" Arthur demanded fiercely. "You promised to stand my friend."

"Read the letter for yourself," said Miss Downing haughtily. "You might have read it when I sent it if you had pleased."

He drew it out of the envelope; then a cry broke from his lips. "This is not your letter," he said. "It is one of mine."

"Put in the wrong envelope," suggested Violet.

"Good heavens!" shouted Arthur; "this is a forgery. I never wrote this. Who has done it?" A sudden lurid suspicion seized him. "It is your writing on the envelope, Miss Downing," he said, in a curious low voice. "Did you write the letter too? All for our good, of course?"

"The letter! Which letter? I am all confused."

"This," said Arthur sternly, handing her the enclosure.

She read it, amazed and horrified:

"Pyncholk, September 11th, 1893.

"MY DEAR ALICE,—I think you must have guessed that for the last ten days my feelings towards you have undergone a serious change. As you also seem to have

repented our ill-advised engagement, I write this to set you free—completely free. We are fortunate in finding out just in time how ill-assorted we are. Where there is no spiritual affinity there can be no true marriage. I am too clever for you, too spiritual, too sensitive. You are dull, practical, unable to appreciate the artistic temperament; you are suited to a farmer, not to an artist. My wife must be one who can inspire me, work with me, sympathise with me. I am too highly strung to be strong, and need a strong outside spirit to guide and support me. If I were to marry you, I should sink to the level of the magazine illustrator. With the woman who is my true twin soul I shall command the world. I am doing you no injury. There are plenty of men who would choose a girl like you to look after their material comforts. I sincerely trust that you may find with one of them such happiness as you may be capable of enjoying. Strange indeed that the same word should be used to express the mere animal content of certain persons in their torpid existence, and the high, passionate rapture which will be mine with Virginie Vaucluse.—Yours no more—only hers,

"ARTHUR DANIEL D'AETH KNOLLYS."

"Why, that is not you!" said Miss Downing confusedly.

"Of course it is not me—or I," said Arthur sternly. "It is like my writing, but I need not say I never wrote the letter—never saw it before."

"It is not your name," Miss Downing protested.

"I regret to say it is; but the queer thing is, how did anybody find out? I have been horribly ashamed of those names ever since I was a little chap at a ladies' school, and the other boys used to call me Danny Death. I have hidden away the names ever since like a secret crime. They were given to me in my baptism in honour of a godfather from whom my parents had expectations on my behalf. He who adored me, or should have done so, died a year later, and left me but the name."

"Does Alice know it is your name?" asked Violet.

"Yes, she does; I felt bound to keep no secret from my wife. I had to prepare her, you see, for the startling revelation of the marriage register. She is not superstitious, but it would have given any bride a turn to see on her wedding morning such an awful word written over her name."

"Can Alice have written the letter herself?" said Miss Downing stupidly.

"Not very likely, seeing she is sane above the average of healthy girls. You addressed it," turning fiercely again upon Miss Downing, displaying the envelope inscribed in her thin handwriting. "You ought to know what you put inside. Why should Alice have sent the letter in an envelope at all if the envelope did not belong to it!"

"You cannot possibly think I would do such a wicked thing?" whimpered Aunt Robina.

"Can't you think of some one more likely?" said Violet impatiently. "I didn't write it, nor did Miss Downing, and you say you didn't."

"I swear I didn't!" he almost shouted.

"And I think the Kinnairds are above suspicion."

"Freeland!" suggested Arthur, looking quite murderous.

"That is quite out of the question," said Violet icily.

"Besides, how could he know Arthur's names?" asked Miss Downing. "I am sure I had no idea he had all those horrible names."

"And how did he get my seal?" Arthur asked, suddenly observing the flap side of the envelope, which had escaped earlier observation, the letter being torn open. "See, it was sealed with my own ring—a horse's head crest and the motto, 'Toujours loyal.' I am positive—perfectly positive—the ring has not been off my finger for years; never mislaid; never out of my sight."

"Does Alice spell her name—the little 'a'—with an acute accent?" asked Violet, glancing at the end of the letter, where "Miss Alice á Court" was written in business-like fashion after the signature.

"Certainly not," Miss Downing answered decisively.

"Now, that's another very funny thing," said Arthur, taking up the letter again. "I always used to write the 'a' that way, and she had hardly got me cured of it. I said it wasn't worth while to learn the right way when she would drop it altogether so soon," and he groaned. Then a new idea struck him. "I never write her name at the end of letters like that. I haven't the least idea why anybody ever does. It is so superfluous."

"It must be put into a detective's hands at once," said Violet.

"To find it out ourselves would be

better," suggested Miss Downing. "We don't want a scandal."

"I suppose you want Alice to be happy and a terrible mistake put right," said Violet sternly.

Little doubts would hover about the confines of her intelligence. What if Miss Downing had forged the letter? Every one knew how she wanted Dick Freeland for Alice, how little she had cared for the engagement with Arthur Knollys. Alice would most likely have confided to her the dark secret of Arthur's names, and she was the person next to Alice most likely to know of his incorrect spelling, and had better opportunities than any one else of possessing herself for a time of his ring. He might so easily have left it on a wash-hand stand in her house, and would not remember such a trifling incident. Still, it was odd that she should have attempted no disguise when addressing the envelope.

Violet took up the envelope. The detective fever had seized her. She had studied the methods of the late renowned Sherlock Holmes, and now was an opportunity for putting them in practice.

"Is this one of your own envelopes?" she asked of Miss Downing. "It is quite plain—no address upon it except the stationer's under the flap: Robertson and Brown, Wedderburn."

"I generally get my paper there," Miss Downing admitted, while Violet turned over the envelopes on the writing-table until she found the larger portion of a packet which exactly matched.

"Would you mind letting me see the letter, Mr. Knollys?" she asked. "Thanks. Plain again, but of thick vellum, Albert size. Have you any like this? It is slightly perfumed—Ylang-ylang, I think; but of course it has passed through Alice's hands. I do not remember her favourite scents."

"She never uses scent at all," said Arthur; "and certainly not this stuff."

"The envelope has nothing to do with the letter," said Miss Downing. "I admit that is mine and the handwriting is mine, but I never had any note-paper like that. I detest that rough sort, and the size is most inconvenient. I wrote to Alice lately on my ordinary smooth paper. She has put the forged letter into my envelope."

"Did you write to her at fifty, Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park, on September the eleventh?" asked Violet.

"No—that is—no—certainly not. I wrote to her at Thurloe Square—and later than that. The eleventh must have been the very day she went away. I could have had nothing to write about then."

Violet again bent her brows over the envelope.

"There have been some figures in pencil down here beside the postage stamp," she said.

She shut the envelope up in her hand and demanded:

"Where do you usually stick your postage stamp, Mr. Knollys?"

"In the usual place—right-hand top corner."

"And you, Miss Downing?"

"In the usual place—at the top corner, of course. I should never think of doing anything else."

"This is in the bottom left corner," said Violet impressively. "A person capable of writing an acute accent over the 'a' of à Court might, of course, be capable of stamping his letters left-handedly, but he would probably do it habitually if at all. There is, I think, something concealed under this stamp. We must float it off in water."

Arthur laughed derisively, but Miss Downing was immensely excited, and hastily filled a saucer with water. The stamped corner of the envelope was dipped in the water, the two women watching it as intently as sorceresses reading fate in a magic pool. Even Arthur held his breath and looked interested when Violet drew the envelope from its bath and carefully peeled off the stamp.

"'Pring—four bulbs,'" she read.

"Pring does the garden!" cried Miss Downing. "Oh, the wicked old man, can he have done it?"

Miss Sandys was silent like her great model. She closely examined the damp envelope, the very faint figures, little more than marks of pencil pressure beside the newly-revealed, wet black-pencilled words.

"It reads now," she said, after a silence during which two hearts beat like eight-day clocks: "'Pring, three shillings and sixpence; four bulbs, two shillings and sixpence.' When did you pay Pring, or mean to pay Pring, three-and-six and half-a-crown for bulbs?"

"Pring was doing the garden last week."

"The postmark is September the eleventh," said Miss Sandys. "Have you an account book?"

"The day after the ball!" groaned Arthur.

"Here is my account book," said Aunt Robina eagerly. "I paid Pring three and-six on the ninth, and two-and-six for bulbs; not the eleventh."

"You have probably jotted it down on an envelope to remind yourself, on the eighth or ninth."

"But I should not use a spoilt envelope again."

"The stamp covered the words," Miss Sandys reminded her. "Not that I accuse you of the forgery."

"I should hope not," said Aunt Robina indignantly.

The sight of the envelope, denuded of the stamp, though still branded by post-mark, suddenly struck Arthur.

"It looks like the envelope I lost," he said excitedly. "The one you wrote Alice's address on for me."

"A very natural solution of one part of the mystery," said Violet patronisingly. "One would use a soiled envelope for writing an address."

"I must have dropped it somewhere, and the forger found it and put the letter in," he cried.

"A forger who could copy your handwriting so exactly as to deceive yourself and Alice, and who knew your full name," said Violet repressively. She did not allow a free hand in guessing to outsiders now she had taken the case over. "And who also knows the lady mentioned"—colouring and hesitating—"Miss Virginie Vaucluse."

"There is no such person," cried Arthur.

"Mrs. Kinnaird knows all about her," Miss Downing reminded him.

"Well, it is more than I do. I never heard the name before," Arthur declared testily.

"And Mr. Percival Grey knows her."

"By-the-bye, I wrote to Chevening for Percival Grey's address," exclaimed Arthur. "It's a queer thing I have never had it."

"You have been wandering about so," said Miss Downing. "It is probably following you about the lakes; or yours may be following him all over the world at this tiresome holiday time."

"Did you call at your inn for your letters?" asked Violet. "There may be some waiting for you."

"I never thought of it. There may be any number. I will run over at once. I did not have them sent on in case of mistakes," said Arthur breathlessly.

He vanished like lightning, and could hardly frame the question when he dashed into the little bar. There were several letters awaiting him. He tossed them all over with trembling hands. There were none from Norway, as he had wildly thought might be possible. Then he examined more particularly, tearing each open to glance at the signatures, for he knew none of the handwritings.

Three were bills, two were gunsmiths' circulars. Then came four congratulatory notes accompanying wedding presents; he laughed harshly over them. The next he took up was in a large, feminine, awkward hand; he opened it with a sneer of anticipation. Another present, of course.

The signature was "Lydia Boyd."

He scowled in a way terrible to behold. What business had this woman to write to him? It was she who cast the first shadow over his sunlit path of love. Perhaps she wrote to acknowledge another imaginary offering of flowers. He read:

"102, Curzon Street, Mayfair,
September 15th, 1893.

"DEAR MR. KNOLLYS,—I shall be so pleased if you will come and have tea with me at five on Thursday, if you receive this in time and if you are disengaged; if not, come the first day you can. I hear from Mrs. Waterton that you are in town. As we must be the only conversible creatures cast upon this human desert of autumnal London, I think we ought to cheer and comfort each other.—Yours ever,

"LYDIA BOYD.

"I am obliged to address this to the 'Red Lion' at Pyncholk, as I have forgotten your town address. Of course, the people will send it on."

It was strange that his first conscious sentiment on reading this letter was startled thanksgiving for danger safely past. A whole fortnight had elapsed since the invitation was given. What business had that woman to ask him to tea? It was a confounded piece of impudence.

The last letter of all was from Mr. Chevening, who was enjoying the leisures of the Long Vacation on the Upper Thames in a house-boat. Grey's clubs were the University and the Reform. Grey himself was, he believed, in the land of the Midnight Sun. Arthur wondered how he had been such an idiot as not to ask Chevening if he had ever heard of Virginie Vaucluse. But then he had not seen her

name in his own handwriting when he asked for Grey's address, and she had not seemed to him so distinct a personality, but more probably a figment of Mrs. Kinnaird's brain, and a false memory of Grey's own.

He returned to Miss Downing's house with the barren message of Elijah's little boy. "There is nothing. By-the-bye," he added, "there was something. What do you think of this for impudence?" flinging Miss Boyd's note upon the table, with a blush for all his angry defiance. "Not that it has any bearing upon the case in point, but I thought you had better know—though, of course, there is nothing to know."

Miss Downing frowned. Violet Sandys noted his confusion and inconsistencies with interest.

"It is the same sort of paper," said Miss Downing, taking it up, "and scented, too!"

Violet almost visibly quivered with excitement like a hound on the scent of a fox.

"Is it another forgery?" she asked.

"Oh, no; nothing of that sort," said Arthur.

The amateur lady detective was at a disadvantage. She could not ask to see a letter—but she did so want to examine this one! Miss Downing took the law into her own hands.

"I believe that woman is at the bottom of it all; I always did," she exclaimed. "See here, Violet—yes, she must see, Arthur. Isn't this the same note-paper, or nearly?"

Arthur consented by his eager eyes, and Violet took the letter into her hands.

"It is the same paper exactly, and the same scent. Eureka!"

"She did it?" cried Arthur, questioning.

"Or had it done—I am not an expert in handwriting," said Violet, her excitement subsiding. "There seems to me no trace of likeness between the two letters, and so many people use this sort of paper and this scent. Had she any motive for writing the other letter? Does she know all your names? And Virginie Vaucluse, whoever she may be?"

"As far as I know, it is no to all these questions," said Arthur; "but at least we have something to go upon. I will take the letters up to London to-morrow to an expert, who will clear the matter up at last. She may, of course, have a motive, and have seen my baptismal register, and know Virginie Vaucluse. At any rate, we have no better clue to work from until I hear from Grey, and I must do something or I shall go mad."

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 303.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.

"DR. BRANSTON was there," said Lady Karslake to her husband, as she sat with him in the billiard-room for a few moments on her return home that night. "He was surveying the scene from a particularly scornful altitude! I made him come and talk to me during the interval, hoping to reduce him to a more commonplace level."

She had turned her head lazily as it lay back against her chair, so that she looked full at her husband. She spoke with the utmost nonchalance; but her eyes were less absolutely controlled than was her tongue, and there was a flash of proud defiance in them of which she was quite unconscious. Not the slightest reference had been made between the husband and wife, either in speech or manner, to the scene of the night before. Lady Karslake had appeared at luncheon—Sir William did not appear before midday—with that air of absolute oblivion of any possibility of discord which may be the supreme form of disdain. The indifference of her tone towards her husband was a trifle accentuated; its easy friendliness was a trifle diminished—but that was all.

Sir William did not look at her as she spoke. The slightest suggestion of a cold and satirical little smile just touched the corners of his mouth. He had been lying back in his chair as he sat alone, his chin sunk upon his breast, gazing into the fire like a man who has surrendered himself to thought or memory; thoughts or memories gloomy and unpalatable to the last degree they should have been, judging from his face. But he had roused himself on his wife's entrance, and had given his most elaborately courteous attention to her account of the Alnchester concert. There was a hardly perceptible pause, now, before he said politely:

"I hope you succeeded?"

His wife rose impatiently, and began to gather up the trifles she had scattered—fan, gloves, and so forth.

"Oh, pretty well!" she said languidly. "His social education has been neglected. I'm not sure that it hasn't helped to give him character."

Whether or no Lady Karslake's words were intended to suggest to her husband an intention on her part of supplying the defect in North Branston's education to which she had alluded, her subsequent proceedings seemed to point to the active carrying out of some such intention. North Branston seemed to have become the one man, in the little world in which she now moved, to whom it pleased her to talk, whose attention she condescended to exact. Wherever she met him she was sure to monopolise him, for a longer or shorter period, in a careless, self-assured, composed fashion which seemed to make the fact the simplest matter of course. She went about alone a great deal in these days; Sir William Karslake was called recovered, but it was an understood thing that the chronic state of his health prevented his going into society. It was inevitable that in her husband's absence she should exact elsewhere those trivial male services without which a woman accustomed thereto can hardly exist; and it was apparently equally inevitable that those services should be rendered her by North Branston.

As a matter of fact, the cultivation of North Branston involved in these circumstances was Lady Karslake's self-vindication from the insinuation by which her husband had outraged her. It was her protest to herself—and perhaps to him also—against the insult to which she had been subjected. If she had taken an idle pleasure in North Branston's society hitherto, it pleased her still better now that its enjoyment involved a tacit expression of that sensitive defiance and self-assertion with which she was alight.

It was a gratification which would, doubtless, have palled as the emotions which gave it flavour faded, had not her wayward impulse towards North Branston's society been reinforced by a certain stimulus it gave her—though she realised the fact carelessly enough—in constantly exercising her brains and her curiosity. There were times when he created in her a vague perplexity; a momentary sense of being somehow out of touch with him; which she had never before experienced with any man—and the novel sensation kept their intercourse always fresh to her and preserved her interest as nothing else could have done. Their verbal contact struck out in her all kinds of unexpected lines of thought; or rather of fancy and whim, for her ideas were seldom consecutive enough to be described as thought.

"I want to understand about this philosophy of yours," she said to him once. "Do you know I've not the faintest faith in it? I believe it's something quite different masquerading under a false name!"

The occasion was a dinner party at a country place about five miles from Alnchester; he had come up to her in the conservatory after dinner as the merest matter of course, and stood leaning with folded arms against a pillar, apparently preferring to look down upon her from the vantage-ground which his position gave him.

"Do I ever pose as a philosopher?" he said, parrying her words.

"Certainly," she said promptly. "I wish you would sit down. You pose as a philosopher of the 'take things as they come' school."

"Very well," he said sardonically. "I don't mind owning it. The 'take things as they come' theory, as you call it, Lady Karslake, is about the only one going that will wash."

"I know it washes!" she said, with a little whimsical gesture. "It's my own theory, and it washes beautifully. But that is just where my doubt about you comes in. Now, it washes pink with me, a nice even pink; and it washes dark blue with you. From which I naturally infer," she concluded, with a low laugh, "that there is something wrong with your dye!"

He looked at her for a moment, with a smile just touching his lips.

"Has it occurred to you," he said quietly, "that the medium in which it is washed may have something to do with the result?"

"That's masculine for the soap and water, I suppose?" she returned gaily. "You shouldn't have plunged into an essentially feminine illustration. When we say a thing washes well, we mean that it defies the action of soap and water." She paused, unfurling her fan with a quick turn of her wrist. Then, as she used it slowly and gracefully, she went on in a meditative tone. "Of course," she said, fixing her eyes on him, "if you put a dark blue thing in, a dark blue thing will come out! I suppose that is what you do—but I don't call that taking things as they come."

"What do you call it, may I ask?"

"Taking things as they come," she pursued calmly, "involves a certain indifference, of course. But it must be a placid indifference. Things should be equally satisfactory to one—not equally unsatisfactory."

"And do you think that things are equally unsatisfactory to me?"

He asked the question in a low voice: slowly, almost dreamily, as though he were following her thought unconsciously, and without any deliberate volition.

"Are they not?"

Into her eyes as she asked the question there flashed one of those rare lights of almost magnetic sympathy, and he met them for a moment.

"Yes."

There was a brief silence. North Branston was absorbed in the stern introspect into which he had unconsciously drifted. Lady Karslake was thinking things over. At last her brows drew together in an unwonted pucker of thought.

"Dissatisfaction!" she said. "That is what it comes to, I suppose. Dissatisfaction is a thing I've never been able to understand. If things—circumstances and so on—are not to one's liking, one must adapt one's liking to one's circumstances. It's so much the easiest thing to do." She paused and

looked up into his face. "And—is it worth while to do anything else?" she said gently.

He missed her meaning, though he felt the subtle change in her, and he answered without reserve.

"No," he said, "that's the point. Nothing is worth while. The whole thing is rotten to the core."

She shrank back, looking at him with disturbed, perplexed eyes.

"Ah," she said quickly, "I don't understand that." She shut her fan with a little snap, and a fresh wave of expression swept across her face, obliterating all its deeper lines. "Why go to the core?" she said gaily. "It's not in the least necessary. Perhaps there is no core."

It was such quick changes of humour as this, such sudden transition from sympathy to jesting, that made his unreserve with her possible to North Branston. None of the stiffness or constraint which so often follows self-revelation almost unconscious at the time, ever touched him. He could expand under her magnetic influence, he could indulge almost without knowing it in the relief of self-expression; and then a laugh, or a whimsical turning of the subject, would put him back upon the mental pedestal from which he regarded her, with no more sense of having committed himself than if he had been talking to a child. Their intercourse brought a new note into his everyday life — a note of interest, variety, of positive pleasure; a note which he sounded as often as might be with careless satisfaction. For him, as for Lady Karslake, circumstances had given a touch of extraneous stimulus to their intercourse. The treatment which he had received at the hands of the husband gave the wife's friendliness a peculiar meaning which was grateful to his self-respect—little as he realised it: and there was a certain ignoring of Sir William in their relations which not unpleasantly materialised his sentiments.

North Branston's life had need of any such satisfaction as was to be found in friendship, for his domestic atmosphere at this time was heavily overcharged with trivial irritation. Moreover, Sir William Karslake's action had given Dr. Vallotson a handle over his partner of which he availed himself incessantly, to the utmost straining of their professional relations. It was a season of the year which invariably produced a fruitful source of jar and strain in the Christmas and New Year entertainments in the precincts and in some of the country houses round, to many of which North Branston was invited—though how the fact had arisen no one could have said—while the Vallotsons were not.

North rarely seemed to see Mrs. Vallotson in these days. But when they did meet she scarcely ever recognised his presence. Perhaps the only spontaneous words she spoke to him from week's end to week's end were comprised in the question, with which she would turn suddenly to him after any of the dinner parties or dances before mentioned:

"Was Lady Karslake there?"

Meanwhile, ignored by North Branston with a man's oblivion in such matters; ignored by Lady Karslake with the supreme carelessness of a wilful woman; the little world of Alnchester lived and moved about them and had its being in gossip. Lady Karslake, as a new-comer; and as a new-comer of a manner and appearance utterly at variance with Alnchester canons; was naturally a good deal discussed in the little circle in which she visited; and it was inevitable that in any description of her doings on any given public occasion the narrator should mention North Branston's name at least once. The fact was suddenly observed. There was a little whispering rustle over every tea-table in the precincts, and then there was a breathless pause of observation. The pause was broken by a word or two here, a little, meaning, matter-of-course smile there, and the topic of the hour burst into full blossom. The precincts talked of nothing but Lady Karslake and "young Dr. Branston."

The subject was confined to the precincts at first; but after Lady Karslake had summoned North to her carriage window in the market-place on more than one occasion, and had kept him talking in the bookseller's shop, it asserted itself as one of those topics which united precincts and town in a common interest. The town had naturally less opportunity of observing the phenomena at first hand, since Lady Karslake did not visit within its sphere. Its interest was, consequently, at that smouldering, hardly articulate stage which insufficient detail involves, when, towards the end of January, one of those semi-public occasions presented itself which afforded a meeting ground for town, precincts, and county.

Two such occasions, indeed, presented themselves in intoxicating proximity to one another; two occasions which con-

vulsed Alnchester on their own merits, but which, nevertheless, derived an added excitement from the thought which palpitated delightedly through the town, that they would afford opportunities for that personal observation of the centres of interest which would loosen every tongue. These two occasions were the opening of the Cottage Hospital for children at Hatherleigh, and the annual Infirmary ball which was fixed for the evening of the same day. Where the subject was discussed at all—tentatively and in whispers—it was a moot point as to which occasion would prove the more fruitful to the discriminating observer: the opening, as it was called, or the ball. The opening, however, as coming first, had a certain advantage in the balance of excitement; and Alnchester flocked out to Hatherleigh, the day having arrived, on the tip-toe of anticipation.

"Will you kindly tell me if anything extraordinary has happened to my bonnet?" said Lady Karslake, with a little laugh.

She was standing in the refreshment tent, thrown out from one of the wards of the new Hospital for the opening day. The opening ceremony was over, and the large tent was thronged from end to end with Alnchester, great and small, town rubbing shoulders with precincts, county blandly smiling on both; the whole permeated with an atmosphere of excited enjoyment which, considering the heat of the over-warmed, over-lighted, and overfilled place, spoke well for the general spirits of the majority. Lady Karslake was standing near the entrance from the hospital, a very dainty picture in soft brown, with a cup of tea in her hand. Her question was addressed to Archdeacon French, who was standing beside her holding her muff, and his eyes rested on her with a grave, appreciative smile as he answered:

"I am not a judge of bonnets, I fear, but the condition of yours appears to me to be—normal. May I enquire what has raised so uneasy a spirit in you?"

She laughed.

"If you were not a man," she said gaily, "you would be aware that almost every woman in the place has favoured me with a more or less critical and disapproving inspection. If my bonnet isn't crooked, I suppose it's not the fashion in Alnchester! The Alnchester fashion is very decided."

Archdeacon French smiled, as he was obviously called upon to do; but it was rather an absent-minded expression of amusement, and his keen eyes as they rested on her were grave and perplexed.

"Suppose we go further on?" he said. "Perhaps our position, so near the entrance, is rather more conspicuous than you care about?"

She accepted his consideration for her with a gracious smile and gesture of negation.

"Thanks!" she said. "I don't think the criticism is very formidable—is it?—and I told Dr. Branston he would find me here when he came off duty. Those good people take a long time to get themselves off, don't they?"

The "good people" thus referred to were the Lord Lieutenant of the county and his wife, who were being attended to their carriage by the committee and authorities of the Hospital, among whom North Branston was, of course, numbered.

Archdeacon French did not answer immediately, and when he did speak his words were no reply to her last sentence.

"I observe, Lady Karslake," he said pleasantly, "if you will forgive my saying so, that you are one of the few people who appreciate Branston."

She glanced up at him with quick, surprised eyes.

"Is it an appreciation we share?" she said lightly. "I assure you I thought I stood alone!"

He shook his head with a slight smile.

"I have known him many years," he said. "He has a position in Alnchester of exceptional difficulty; a position which would be more easily rendered utterly untenable than improved."

Archdeacon French's tone had grown very grave as he concluded; graver, as it seemed, than he had at first intended. But Lady Karslake did not notice it. She had glanced carelessly towards the entrance and was smiling a greeting to North Branston as he made his way towards them.

"Here you are!" she said, as he joined them. "In an unofficial capacity at last, I trust? Why a man who is at other times a friendly creature should invariably become intolerable when he is in office is a riddle which either of you may solve if you can. Now," she continued, turning to North, "you had better come and have some tea after your exertions!"

She moved carelessly in the direction of the refreshment buffet, North Branston following her example. Archdeacon French paused for perhaps a second, then he

too turned, and the three went down the tent together.

"Why, there's Archdeacon French having tea with them!"

The comment had expressed itself all over the room in glances, covert gestures, and half-finished murmurs; and the above definite if rather breathless exclamation was uttered by Mrs. Bennett. Having given utterance to the above startling statement, she added in a disappointed tone which strove to be thoroughly impartial:

"Well, that doesn't look as if the Archdeacon saw anything to disapprove, now does it?"

The companion to whom this question was addressed was Miss Goode; and Miss Goode shook her head shrewdly as she answered:

"The Archdeacon is a man! And men are as stupid as owls about that sort of thing, don't you think? Did you notice them—Lady Karslake and Dr. Branston—before the opening, and when the wards were being shown? He never left her side, my dear Mrs. Bennett—never once! I never saw anything more marked! Oh, there's no doubt it has been going on for weeks. I've heard of it from several quarters."

Mrs. Bennett nodded sagely.

"Of course," she said; "so have I, my dear. And so has every one for that matter. Well, it does puzzle me! I'm not surprised at anything in Dr. Branston, I must say; but what she can see in him—that's what passes me."

"What does he see in her, I say?" returned Miss Goode emphatically. "Dr. Branston——"

She stopped abruptly. There had been a little sharp movement in the crowd to her right, and Miss Goode found herself face to face with Constance Vallotson, who, with Bryan Armitage, must have been almost at her elbow throughout the conversation. A rather incoherent greeting of the girl broke from both ladies simultaneously, and then sudden business claimed them on the other side of the room, and they moved away in some haste.

"Here's a chair, Connie," said Bryan, also speaking with rather incoherent haste. "Up in the corner. Come on!"

Constance's head was extraordinarily erect, and there was an immensely superior scorn on her pretty little face; but her cheeks were slightly flushed, nevertheless. She followed him in silence, but when they were seated she turned to him majestically.

"Have you heard anything of that sort before, Bryan?" she demanded. "Anything about North and Lady Karslake, I mean? Ah, yes, I see you have! Now could there be a stronger argument in favour of what I am always trying to make you see?"

Constance's plan had advanced considerably—as far as discussion may be considered advancement—in the last two months. A large proportion of the young men and maidens of Alnchester had been introduced to such an outline of her projected club as might be suited to their inferior intellects, and the idea had been received with enthusiasm. It was, indeed, in perfect working order—on paper—and only waited a preliminary step the necessity of which was acknowledged, even while the state of things it indicated was deplored, by the president herself; namely, some conversation on the subject with the Alnchester elders. Bryan Armitage, however, alone knew the whole mind of Alnchester's future regenerator, and all that the club was to develope into. Eminently unsatisfactory as he had proved himself from the first, he remained her sole confidant; and much time, much careful thought, and much lucid argument had been expended by her in the uphill task of fitting him for his position.

He turned his face to her now, still flushed and indignant as Mrs. Bennett's words had left it, and looked at her in blank incomprehension which spoke but ill for the progress he had effected.

"I don't see that, Connie," he said.

"Because you don't reason," said Constance severely. "It's perfectly obvious if you look at it in the right way. Of course there's nothing between North and Lady Karslake. They are friends, I suppose. But people like the Alnchester people can't recognise the possibility of friendship between man and woman. And why not? Because their ideas need to be enlarged! And large ideas can only be induced by the larger-minded training of youth."

There was a lofty positivism about the last words which should surely have convinced any right-minded young man; but Bryan Armitage did not seem to be greatly impressed by it. He was playing absently with the end of her fur boa which lay on her knee.

"Do you believe in friendship between a man and a woman, Con?" he said.

The large-eyed pity and contempt of the glance which she turned upon him might

have withered him had he looked up, but he did not.

"My dear Bryan!" she said. "Don't ask such trivial questions! You surely don't expect me to thresh out that time-honoured old argument with you? Of course I believe in it! My dear boy, if you will think for a moment you will see that you and I exemplify it in our own persons! The very fact that there can ever have existed a question on the subject shows how entirely false a conception of the whole subject has prevailed."

He looked up with a little sigh and a quick laugh.

"And yet it's pretty firmly rooted—that conception," he said. "I don't believe it'll come up in a hurry."

"Radical reform is never effected in a hurry," was the majestic rejoinder, "and radical reform is what is needed. It is the ridiculous constraint of the relations between man and woman which is at the bottom of everything."

The didactic little voice was so childish; the words uttered with such conviction were so obviously a formula, that the irrepressible flash of merriment in the eyes of the young man by her side seemed to meet it more fittingly than his equally irrepressible movement of intense distaste.

"I say, Con," he said abruptly, "I hate to vex you, dear, but I do fight shy of hearing you say things like that! Look here, dear, I'm an awful duffer, and can't explain it properly, but I know there's no end of a screw loose somewhere; you take my word for it. Don't be angry with me for saying so, that's a good girl."

Constance rose serenely, and regarded him with an air of calm pity.

"No, I'm not angry with you," she said. "It distresses me very much to see how very stupid you are, Bryan, but men are all alike, and I suppose you can't help it. Look, there's mother! She wants me to go!" She stopped suddenly, gazing across to where Mrs. Vallotson stood on the other side of the room, alone as it seemed for the moment, waiting for her daughter, to whom she had beckoned. "Bryan," she said abruptly, "doesn't mother look very odd? Oh, Bryan, it really is too bad! She must have heard the kind of thing we heard. She has stiff little old-fashioned theories, you know, unfortunately, and it's the kind of thing that would annoy her awfully."

Bryan had followed the direction of her eyes, and to him also it seemed that there was an odd pallor about Mrs. Vallotson's face.

"She looks awfully tired, Con," he said reassuringly, "but I expect that's all. We'll go across to her. I say, Connie, which are my dances for to-night?"

AN AUTUMN MORNING.

THERE is something in the crisp air of a fine autumn morning that invites early rising. Not too early, indeed, nothing heroic in that line such as summer sometimes suggests, when dawn is upon you before you are fairly in bed, and the warm glow of sunrise suggests all kinds of expeditions to be started before the world is awake. But in autumn the morning comes to meet you as it were, and you may witness the stir and bustle of reviving day without any exhausting experiments in early rising. Now is the opportunity for making the acquaintance of the milkman, otherwise but a wandering voice, with his hand-cart hung with clinking cannakins; there are others who drive fast-trotting little ponies, but the pony has a way of trotting off to Camptown—or is it Kempton?—races instead of minding his regular rounds, and on the whole the hand-cart is safer. And if your sleep has been, like Rip van Winkel's, of a quarter of a century or more, you will rub your eyes and wonder what has become of the jolly old milkwoman with her yoke and pails, who was the confidante of all the pretty young lasses on her round, and who took a kind of maternal interest in the families she served. But she has disappeared like the Dodo, though still her melancholy cry haunts the streets and squares of London town.

But there are girls and young women in plenty of the present era who join in the general march towards work, which sets in shortly before the stroke of eight. Laundry girls in white aprons and with tufted fringes of hair pass along in little groups. Now the factory lasses appear, due at the great butter-scotch works, not so smart as the others, but better shod; and girls for the dye-works; all keeping together in their classes, while, if remarks are interchanged between rival groups, they are generally of a sarcastic, depreciatory character. Independent young women walking alone or in pairs belong to the clerical branches. All look a little bleached and pale as if tired to begin with, but the prospect of a hard day's work is not in itself exhilarating, and all will be in better spirits, perhaps, when it is over. Then

there are shopmen hurrying up to get the shutters down; cashiers on bicycles whirl past. Next in front is a clerk—not a City clerk, pronounces a little maid by our side, because he has got iron heels to his boots.

Clusters of villas half-finished rising among fields and market-gardens show knots of workmen reclining on piles of building material, employed with cans of steaming coffee and hunches of bread-and-meat, while black-and-white terriers look on and wag their stumps of tails. The market wagons are beginning to drag slowly home again, piled up with empty baskets; the drivers, who have been up all night, more than half asleep among them, but the horses quite awake to their business and observant of the rules of the road.

"Morning, Ike," cries a smart young 'busman driving out of the yard, flourishing a new whipstock, and with a flower in his button-hole.

"You call it morning," cries a sleepy voice corresponding in speed with the broad-wheeled wagon from which it issues. "It's 'bout arternoon with us market chaps."

Waiting for the 'bus at the corner is a little crowd eager to swarm up to the top, while there is just enough of doubt about the white fleecy clouds that are crowding overhead to fill the inside of the vehicle with prudent people. Some are for the City bound; others, girls with fiddle-cases or rolls of music, for early classes, for Dr. Blimber's academy has resumed its studies, even if the great schools are still in vacation. Country people, too, who swarm in to fill up "empty" London, are early on the road to see everything in a day. Anyhow, the 'bus is full at starting, the conductor jerks the bell three times as the sign of a perfect load, and others may hail it in vain, or chase it down the road with negative results.

If a fine autumn morning fills the omnibuses, a drizzly, foggy one sends thousands clattering up and down the stairs of the dark "Underground," our friend in need during foul weather days. Suburban stations, too, actually overflow with damp people and dripping umbrellas, and railway carriages seem to stretch elastically to take in more and more where there was already enough. And on some dark autumn morning we shall be treated to the annual "block." If it comes only once a year it is none the more welcome on that account.

Yet for any one not in a hurry there is something comical about the general indignation and resentment that is occasioned by a morning block on a suburban line. The indistinctness of the cause of delay, the uncertainty whether its duration will be five minutes or five hours, exasperate the nervous system of all who are delayed, and drive the rigidly punctual people who never were late for business in their lives before almost to the verge of despair. Curious, too, is the effect of the telescoping, so to say, of the various layers of people who in ordinary times are kept apart by a margin of time.

Now glares "the boss" on the unfortunate clerk who ought to have been at the office an hour ago, and when the youth murmurs apologetically "block," rejoins with an exclamation in which the word "blockhead" alone can be distinctly heard. But the boss himself grows uneasy as minute after minute goes by and the signals remain obstinately against us.

Then there bursts in like a whirlwind a young man who flatters himself that he has just caught the train which he generally misses. An ornamental youth this, of the legal profession, who starts with astonishment as he sees the solid managing clerk in an opposite corner.

"Hullo, Fergusson!" he cries. "You here! I must be jolly early."

"No, sir," replies Fergusson, with his customary gravity, "I fear it is I who am 'jolly' late!"

Quite at her ease is the young lady clerk, with her weekly instalment of fiction, who does not care if we don't go on till midnight.

"I should like to see my boss pitching into me because the horrid train was late!" she remarks by way of encouragement to the young man opposite. And then when half the passengers are on the platform, vowing to take cabs at the company's expense; to sue for damages; or to scarify the management in the newspapers, clank! the signal goes down, the engine gives a snort, the demonstrators scramble aboard, and the block is a thing of the past.

But we have nothing to do with railways this fine autumn morning. Our walk is in the district called Palatia, now a city of the departed. Hardly a sign of life in these wide streets lined with tall mansions, except where a housemaid, without even the excuse of a broom, leans against the pillar of a tall portico and chats amicably with a Guardsman. Avoiding this desolate spot,

here are some pleasant, old-fashioned walks about which a few quaint, old-fashioned houses have survived the general racket of huge building operations. This one particular avenue might be called the Anchorites' walk; and now is just the hour when all the anchorites are taking their walks abroad accompanied by their favourite dogs. Quiet, solemn paths strewed with the morning's harvest of dead leaves, suit the quiet, solemn recluses of the neighbourhood. Here is one tall being in a high peaked hat that suggests the Commonwealth, while long grey elf-locks straggling over his velvet collar would denote him as one of the old Cavaliers. And the dogs that gambol about him are of the same period, the delicate spaniels that littered in Royal palaces, and were nursed in the laps of Court beauties.

And what a stately figure is that of an old lady in black satin, who accompanies a bulky fox terrier on his morning walk, keeping carefully behind him and shepherding him with a crook-handled stick lest he should fall into bad company! And most dutifully does Master Grip run on in front, till he sees out of the corner of his eye that his mistress has fallen into one of her customary reveries. Perhaps her solitary walk is no longer unaccompanied; she may lean on the arm of some stalwart son; she may see the lover who was waiting for her, under the trees, half a century ago, to whom she never came. But whatever she sees with the inward eye, the outward one is for the moment unobservant, and Grip takes advantage of the opportunity. First he scratches a hole as big as himself, which he makes a pretence of filling up with a flourish of the hind legs. Then he sees another dog approaching, bristles, crouches, dances round in a merry chase. Grip is enjoying himself freely, when he hears the sound of a little silver whistle, and subsides at once into his former spiritless shuffle.

And here is a groom from the Palace with a full convoy of pet dogs—skipper and spitz and basset-hound, and all kinds of new-fangled dogs, as well as a few old favourites. All the ladies of honour are abroad, and John, like the swineherd of old, collects his flock and leads them away to the forest. And further on big hairy dogs are splashing about in the pond, rousing the indignation of all the feathered tribe.

The broad ride is almost empty, except for a few dealers trying young horses, and a lady rider who is also professional. All the world has gone away. Yet here are actually some who are already back. A flight of schoolgirls in straw hats and streaming curls, mounted on shaggy little ponies, come galloping along, the family coachman on a tall horse keeping up at a smart trot. And, happy recognition, here is Alice with her father, and Alice is a tall girl who is coming out next season, but still wears her hair of spun silk hanging to her waist. Then Alice joins the party, showing off her spirited little mare that plunges, and rears, and walks about on her hind legs, to the pride and delight of all, except the steady family coachman who feels that the weight of his responsibility entitles him to remonstrate. And here comes Simkins pulling hard at his steed, a playful old roadster, who is kicking up the tan in all directions, but who has no serious intention of running away.

By this time the roar of traffic is fairly started and sounds fitfully in the distance, while a light haze of dust from the great highway shows itself even above the trees. And there the shops also are waking up; the great plate-glass windows are occupied by elegant young men who are building up the elaborate trophies of goods of all kinds that are to tempt the eyes of all beholders; while in other windows young women adjust the draperies of skeleton forms in wood and wire, or spread artful arrangements of costly fabrics, for the undoing of womankind in general

But there are streets that keep dissipated hours, and are not fit to be seen till the day is well advanced. The Strand is one of these, with a dirty, racketty look about it as if it had been up all night, and fighting and rolled in the mud. It will be all right when it has had a wash and brush-up, and has put on its business air. There are plenty of travellers stirring, going out or coming in by early morning trains, with railway 'buses piled up with baggage, and cabs tottering along under a weight of portmanteaux. And the great Market is dissolved into heaps of mud and cabbage-stalks, and a general smear over all the regions round about, which a fireman is endeavouring to squirt away with a branch-pipe and hose which he handles like a fireman, valiantly, and never mind your boots!

In contrast how trim and proper is the City! Even Billingsgate has washed its face and hands, and people hastening to the steam wharfs, for last trips down the

river, last excursions to Boulogne, and the rest, are greeted with no harsher sounds than "By your leave," or "Beg your pardon, miss."

And now that we have packed off our legislators, everything seems to sleep about Westminster and Whitehall. Downing Street has got the covers on, and painters and cleaners are all over the public offices. Hard-worked juniors stumble over pails and whitewash brushes, but the higher flight are all away, and young De Tomkyns is left in charge disconsolately to receive deputations from expectant boot-makers or long-suffering tailors. And passing from the public offices into St. James's Park, what a woful scene is this that meets the eye! Autumn has brought to town from all sides a vast contingent of homeless and broken people, to join the already crowded ranks of London loafers. And here is spread over the sward a thick carpet of such homeless creatures, who on every fine morning as soon as the gates are open, throng to the place as a handy open-air caravanserai. Not that the slumbering crowd is entirely composed of the destitute. Market hands and others employed all night come here to sleep away the day, saving their lodging money and breathing a purer air than that of the East End doss-house. Yet absolute destitution is the prevailing feature, with nothing that the wayfarers can call their own but the rags which cover them, and these by only a precarious tenure. One shudders to think of the lot of these poor waifs and strays when winter is once more upon us with frosts, and biting winds, and driving snow-wreaths.

But a truce to the dismals, for here with a tow-row-row comes the band of the British Grenadiers, and the gleam of the marching column among the trees, followed by the little crowd that always assembles in honour of the guard-mounting at St. James's. The open-air dossers hardly raise their heads as the martial procession passes by, but errand-boys, nursemaids, loafers in general, and a contingent of country cousins throng to the quadrangle of the homely old Palace to assist at the daily spectacle. And with this military stir, the opening of the day autumnal may be considered as fairly accomplished. Then hurrying away to Charing Cross to join the business crowd, we may notice the refreshment-stalls by Spring Gardens, and—not the cows, it is perhaps too early for London cows to be abroad, but trusses of hay which seem to show that they may be expected. And this faint smell of country hay is all that is left to remind us that Milk Fair is not entirely defunct.

And now the avenues of big hotels are all astir, and four-horse coaches that have persevered through the bad weather and over the dead season, are rewarded by good loads of passengers. And this fine autumn morning we may envy them their drive, for there is nothing in the world to beat the woodland scenes of old England when autumn tints the leaves with the dying glories of the year.

SOME MORE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS.

Of Cain and Abel there are not many traditions. Reference has been made to the doubts thrown upon the former's parentage, and to the view taken by De la Peyrère of the reasonableness of his fear when he said: "Whosoever findeth me shall slay me." The ill-feeling between the brothers bears out, according to the Rabbis, the truth of the cynical axiom "Cherchez la femme," for Cain preferred the appointed bride of Abel to his own. The immediate cause of the quarrel was, however, a theological discussion in which Cain maintained an atheistic position, and Abel, though bold and decisive "in rem," was gentle and forbearing "in personam"—conduct which was the more praiseworthy as he was physically the stronger. But the spirit of murder had been active in Cain's bosom even before the sacrifices had been offered, and this it was which caused his to be rejected. Abel must die. But death was a new thing; how was it to be effected? The unspoken query was answered by the Fiend, who appeared in human form and called Cain's attention to the ease with which he killed a bird by crushing its head between two stones. And so "righteous Abel" was slain; and, filled with horror and dismay and bewilderment, his murderer carried the dead body about from place to place till the hideous evidences of the first corruption became too powerful, and he left it where their father must needs discover it. When Adam found the body he was at a loss how to dispose of it, till God taught him by showing a raven digging with its beak a grave for another bird which it had attacked and killed. Cain wandered away with his "mark" showing as a horn on his forehead, and the years went by till blind Lamech,

his descendant, walked afield one day leaning on the shoulder of his son, young Tubal Cain. The lad's eye caught a movement of the thicket as of a wild beast in ambush, and directing his father's arrow he bade him shoot. The shaft flew with deadly precision, but the wild beast was Cain; and when Lamech was told of the fatal blunder he smote his palms together in his anguish with such force as to kill the boy beside him.* And hence arose the pitiful wail: "I have slain a man to my wounding and a young man to my hurt; if Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, surely Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

Seth—the gift of God, or the Appointed—was very beautiful when he was born; and the Rabbis, who are great advocates of metempsychosis, assert that he was animated by the soul of Abel, which subsequently passed into Moses. When he was forty years old he was taken up to heaven and shown "the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be," and a fairly general consensus of opinion makes him to have been very learned. To him is attributed the origin of the Signs of the Zodiac; he wrote treatises on astronomy, two of which, engraved on two pillars of stone, survived the Flood, and were extant, according to Josephus, in the first century of our era; the Mohammedans say that to him were given fifty books of prophecy. In fact, so highly was he esteemed that it has been held, not as tradition but as sober history, that for a considerable space of time he was an actual deity amongst the unfaithful Israelites.†

Enoch—say the Talmudists—when on earth, pursued the craft of a shoemaker, and frequently devoted himself to solitary meditation and prayer. A Divine call summoned him to work and benefit his fellow-men, and he became king of the world. Long and peaceful was his reign, and his subjects regarded him with affection mingled with awe. When the time came—after he had reigned some three hundred and fifty years—that he should be translated, he solemnly blessed his people, and mounting his horse rode away towards the place indicated. Many followed him; six times he bade them leave him, and each time some obeyed, but a few remained with him to the last. As these did not return, a party went in search of them, and on the spot where they had last been seen was a mass of snow and ice, and beneath it were the dead bodies. But Enoch's was not there, for a chariot and horses of fire had carried him away, and therefore, wrote the inspired historian, "he was not"—meaning he was not found where search was made for him. After his translation the commentators aver that Enoch became a mighty angel named Metatron. Mighty indeed he was! The lowest estimate of his stature is the highest of that given for Adam, namely, that it would take five hundred years to walk from head to foot; another more circumstantially gives his height as seven hundred million miles.

When we remember the important rôle ascribed by writers of our own century to the patriarch Noah—that most, if not all, of the religions of antiquity were derived from true or distorted traditions of the Flood—we need not be surprised that around him clusters a rich galaxy of rabbinical legends. Space, however, forbids us to do more than glance at one or two. As soon as he was born he gave evidence of his piety by praying aloud, and when in later life he preached and warned the people to repent, he made, by Divine command, a sort of wooden bell or clapper, which is the origin of the service bells of the Church. The window of the Ark was one precious stone, and the men were separated from the women by the body of Adam, which Noah was ordered to take with him. The Giants, who were then at the zenith of their power, laughed to scorn the idea of the Flood; the waters of the earth, said they, would scarcely rise to their middles, and the fountains of the great deep they would tread down with their feet. But the water was made boiling hot, and so they all miserably perished except Og, who clambered on to the top of the Ark, and was fed by Noah through an aperture in the roof—the giant and a rhinoceros being the only creatures other than the inmates of the Ark who saved their lives.* The Ark must have been of marvellous buoyancy, considering that Og was six miles in height and broad in proportion, while the size of the rhinoceros may be imagined when we are told that one of a day old was as big as Mount

* Some say he was only severely injured and lamed for life, which circumstance and a plausible phonetic rendering of his name in connection with his recorded proficiency in metal-work have induced some to identify him with the god Vulcan.

† The Gnostic sect, Sethites, which sprang up in the second century, perpetuated this cult with some modifications.

* The Rabbis quote as authority for Og's escape, the eleventh verse of the third chapter of Deuteronomy.

Ararat. Og is stated to have lived three thousand years, and to have been slain in single combat by Moses. He seems to have always been inimical to the Israelites, on one occasion going so far as to take up a mountain three miles in circumference to hurl upon their camp. But, say the Rabbis, God sent an army of ants which ate through the mountain, so that it slipped over the giant's shoulders and stuck there, his projecting teeth rendering it impossible to push it back. This incident is, they hold, referred to in the seventh verse of the third Psalm, which should read, "Thou hast made the teeth of the ungodly to project." Other estimates of the stature of his formidable majesty of Basan are still more startling, if somewhat inconsistent. The soles of his feet were forty miles long; one day a man chased a roe for three miles up a long tunnel without coming to an end. The tunnel proved to be Og's shinbone. He built sixty cities, each of which was sixty miles high; his average meal was a thousand oxen, a thousand wild roes, and a thousand firkins of drink; a single drop of his sweat weighed thirty-two pounds.

But to return to Noah. The immediate warning that he received of the imminence of the Flood was the welling up of boiling water in an oven sunk in the ground—the very oven, it is said, in which Eve was wont to bake her bread. The animals were miraculously brought to Noah, and his hands were guided, so that his right fell always on the male and his left on the female; the patriarch's unbelieving wife* and son refused for the last time his entreaties to seek salvation; and on Friday the seventeenth of October the Deluge commenced. The Rabbis evidently hold that the heat of the water remained unabated during the continuance of the Flood, for they say that from this cause it is that the dove's feet are pink even until now.

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, becomes a sort of Oriental demigod. At his birth a wondrous and brilliant star rose in the east, which absorbed or swept away four other stars from the corners of the heavens. Magicians foretold that he should be the progenitor of a race which should be fatal to the reign of Nimrod, and the terrified King ordered him to be put to death. This cruel mandate Terah evaded by the familiar expedient of substituting the son of a slave, who was promptly slain.

* The Mohammedans say that Noah's wife Waila, or Wahela, tried to nullify her husband's warnings by asserting that he was mad.

At the age of ten Abraham went to live with Noah and Shem, from whom he learnt the knowledge of the true God, and when he was—according to some—about fifty years old he returned to his father's house, mocked and destroyed the idols of which Terah was chief maker, and as a consequence was thrown into a fiery furnace. When thrown in he was naked, but the angel Gabriel clothed him with a garment of silk of paradise. As in the case of the Three Children, the flames proved fatal to the executioners, no fewer than twenty of whom were destroyed. Another tradition makes Abraham to have been a believer from his earliest youth—despite the second and fourteenth verses of the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua—and say that he was but a child when he was cast into the furnace, and when

> Pitying Heaven to roses turned
> The death flames that beneath him burned.

Abraham left Ur after his deliverance from the fiery furnace and journeyed into the promised land, where, the Rabbis assert, he kept a school. It must not, however, be supposed that all the traditions about the patriarch are so marked by sweet reasonableness. He is said to have been seventy-four feet high; to have built a city for his children by Keturah of such loftiness that no sunbeams could ever enter it, its only light being derived from a bowl of gleaming jewels; on one occasion he is said to have cut to pieces an eagle, a peacock, a raven, and a cock, to have pounded their bodies, feathers and all, in a mortar, and then to have called them by their names, when part joined to part and the four birds flew away whole and scathless. Concerning the patriarch's visit to Egypt, we are told that his jealousy for Sarah prompted him to the expedient of enclosing her in a large chest. Pharaoh's Customs officers wished to examine it, but this Abraham would not consent to. They assumed then that the chest must contain clothes, and demanded the duty payable on such articles. Abraham agreed so readily that their suspicions were aroused, and they suggested that the contents must be gold. Again the patriarch declared his willingness to pay on gold, and the officers, still unsatisfied, ran up the supposititious value to silk and the most costly jewels. Abraham demurred to nothing; he would pay on anything or everything provided they would not open the box. It was all in vain; the Egyptian "douaniers" were obdurate; the suspicious chest was

opened, and disclosed in verity a jewel of worth, Sarah, in all the charm and witchery of her Hebrew beauty.

The ass which Abraham rode on his journey to sacrifice Isaac is the same which Moses subsequently rode when returning from Midian, and would be used, so the Rabbis held, by the Son of David on His entry into Jerusalem. Isaac himself assisted in building the altar, and bade his father make sharp the knife and firm the cords that the sacrifice might be effectually performed. The opinion, indeed, is held by the Mohammedans that Abraham actually drew his knife across the lad's throat, but without effect, and then it was that the ram was seen in the thicket—the very ram which Abel had sacrificed, and which was miraculously preserved for this great day. Happy though the termination of the episode, it was yet fatal to the sorely-tried mother. Sarah was told that her son had been sacrificed, and in her anguish hurried after her husband but failed to find him, and sorrowful and heart-broken returned home. Here she was met by the same informant, who now told her, "Thy son liveth." The shock and revulsion were too great, and when Abraham and Isaac arrived they were greeted by the sad tidings, "Sarah is dead." Abraham brought the body to the cave of Machpelah to bury it, and when he entered he found the bodies of Adam and Eve preserved from corruption, and able, indeed, to remonstrate and urge their own unworthiness to share the same sepulchre with the wife of so great a man.*

In connection with the traditions respecting Abraham, mention may be made of Nimrod, at whose hands, as has been noticed, the patriarch nearly met his death. Much of his fame as "a mighty hunter" was due to the possession of Adam's coat, given him by God in Paradise, and made, some hold, of the skin of the Serpent. Its ownership had passed through Enoch and Methusaleh to Noah. When the Flood abated and the family of the patriarch left the Ark, it was stolen by Ham, who gave it to Cush, Nimrod's father. After he had reigned two hundred and fifteen years, Nimrod was met by Esau, between whom and the mighty King of Shinar there existed a deadly rivalry. A fierce combat ensued, in which Esau was victorious, and the coat became the spoil of the conqueror, who wore it for some time on great occasions, till on one of his hunting expeditions he lost it, and the more fortunate Jacob became its possessor. Nimrod was the originator of the Tower of Babel. The impious builders boasted great things of what they would do when it was completed. One party swore that they would place their own false gods in heaven; another declared defiance and war against the Almighty, whom they would dare to combat; another arrogantly vaunted that with bow and spear they would smite even Him. And so the huge building progressed till, the Rabbis say, it towered to the height of fifty-six of our miles, and then God smote the builders and confounded their language. Those who had vowed to place their gods in His place were transformed into apes; they who dared to threaten Him with their bow and spear slew each other in their mad bewilderment, and they who thought

O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,

were scattered far and wide upon the earth they had abused. And the mighty tower itself sank till a third of its huge bulk was buried in the ground; another third was consumed by fire; but tradition holds that when Cyrus drew near to level the proud city to the dust, the remaining third, stupendous even in its ruin, was still standing to frown on the bold invader before whose conquering might it was doomed to disappear.

* On a previous occasion Abraham had discovered the bodies. When the Three visited him he sought to kill a roe for their refreshment. The animal escaped and took refuge in the cave where the bodies of our first parents were found in a deep sleep, while a soft light and fragrant odour pervaded the cavern.

WAR AMONG THE FAIRIES.

A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I

THIS is a strange story, and as for the truth of it—well, it is as true as most fairy tales.

Once upon a time, long years ago, there lived a fisherman, named Hans, who had three sons. The hut in which they dwelt was on the very loneliest part of the seashore, and near an enchanted forest called the Fairy Glen, inhabited by fairies, gnomes, water-nymphs, and a host of little uncanny creatures. When the fisherman's sons had grown up and began to roam about the shore, he made them promise that they would not enter the Fairy Glen, and they kept their promise, but not without being sorely tempted to break it, many a time; for from the forest would often issue the most melodious music, to which they listened until their senses were steeped in

it, and their whole souls seemed in harmony with the singers.

The boys had known no home but this hut, they could remember nothing about their mother, and if they chanced to ask their father about her, he evaded giving an answer, and when they persisted he would take his broad sou'wester and leave the hut.

Hans told them never to speak to a woman, because in every one of them dwelt an evil spirit. This assertion did not trouble them while they were young, but when they grew older it puzzled them.

One night, the youngest son, Jasper, could not sleep. He distinctly heard his father, as he lay tossing about, saying:

"Go, I will not listen to you."

Jasper sprang out of bed and approached the window. In the clear moonlight he saw two figures—that of his father and a beautiful fairy. The silvery moonbeams gleamed upon her snowy arms and neck, and kissed her flowing hair until it looked like burnished gold. With outstretched arms she approached the fisherman in a supplicating attitude, but he roughly turned aside.

"Hear me, Hans, hear me," said the fairy. "You are in great peril. Do not go upon the sea until the waning of the moon, or your life will be forfeited."

"And do you think I value my life?" scornfully asked Hans. "Is it so happy that I should grieve to give it up? No! I will not heed you. Leave me."

The fairy turned and left him. Hans lingered on the shore a little while, and Jasper crept back to bed.

The morning dawned clear and bright; the sea in its calmness looked like a sheet of glass. The fisherman hailed with delight the first peep of dawn. As soon as it was light enough he left the hut and made his way to the sea, and, unmooring his boat, glided softly seawards. He rowed vigorously for a time and then withdrew the oars, allowing the boat to drift. Slowly he disappeared out of sight.

Towards noon the sea became "choppy"; the waves lashed the shore, and the wind, until now so gentle, howled furiously.

That evening when the tide came in, the dancing waves laid the dead body of the fisherman on the beach.

CHAPTER II.

On the third evening after the funeral of Hans the fisherman, his three sons—Julian, Ronald, and Jasper—had a talk together about the future. The day had been very hot, and the atmosphere of the hut was suffocating, so the boys went out for a stroll; and unconsciously took the path leading to the Fairy Glen.

"I am sure," said Jasper, "if father had only listened to her he would not have been drowned."

"What do you mean?" asked Ronald.

"Oh," smiled Julian, "he is alluding to his dream."

"I tell you, brothers, it was not a dream. I saw the beautiful fairy with my own eyes."

"Are you sure?" asked Ronald.

"Yes, as sure as I see you now."

"Rubbish!" said Julian.

"Nay, brother," said Ronald, "I begin to fancy that there may be something in it; you know we often hear what father said was fairy music."

"Tush!" said Julian, but he stopped abruptly.

The air was suddenly filled with exquisite music. It began with a weird, discordant note, and melted into mellifluous song like the trilling of a sweet songstress. The music seemed to come from the branches of a tree under which they stood, and the three brothers looked up eagerly, hoping to catch a glimpse of the bird, if bird it were.

They had reached the stile beyond which lay the Fairy Glen, and presently Jasper twitched them by the coat, and whispered:

"Look, brothers, look! There is the fairy I spoke of."

The music ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and the two elder brothers, when they saw the fairy, were amazed at her radiant loveliness; but Jasper was less bewildered. He seemed to recognise in her a friend.

"Was it not you who warned my father of his death?" he asked.

"I warned him, but he did not heed me," answered the fairy, in a sweet voice, "and so he died. But do not let us talk of him now. I am interested in his sons, and would fain help them to decide upon their future. You seem to wonder at my interest; but I knew and loved your mother. Is not that enough?"

This won the confidence of the boys immediately.

"Oh! tell us of our mother," they cried in chorus.

"I will; for the time has come when you should know. Your mother was a

fairy. She was my sister, and having fallen in love with your father, she became a mortal upon certain conditions, so that she might marry him. For five years they lived happily, but your father disobeyed one of the conditions, and that sealed his wife's doom. She was drowned, and her spirit is held captive by water-sprites."

While the fairy queen had been talking to the boys, sweet little creatures, with radiant faces and lovely forms, unseen by the brothers, had woven a bright gossamer web about them, and the tighter they drew their silken cords, the more intense was the reverence with which the boys gazed into the fairy queen's face.

"I have told you about your mother," continued the fairy, "to show you that I fain would help you."

Then turning to Julian she asked: "What would you like to be?"

Julian looked at her a moment; a flush came over his face, his eyes sparkled, and his whole body quivered with excitement, as he said:

"Oh, I crave wealth, that I may be powerful. I would like to rule great men, subdue great minds, and, in short, be great among the mightiest."

The fairy smiled and said: "It shall be as you wish."

Then turning to Ronald she asked: "And what is your desire?"

Ronald looked at her for a moment, and then at his brothers, and then out seawards, as if not knowing how to frame his request.

"Come," said the fairy gently, "don't be afraid; tell me what you wish for, above everything else."

"Give me," said Ronald at last, with great deliberation, "happiness and contentment. I desire neither wealth nor power."

"Your wish shall be granted," said the fairy cheerfully, and then she turned her sparkling eyes upon Jasper. "And you," she asked, "most beloved of your mother, what do you desire?"

Jasper did not answer.

"Why are you silent?"

"Because I wish neither power nor wealth, happiness nor contentment. My greatest wish at this moment is to enter the Fairy Glen, and to lie by a purling stream with tall trees overhead, listening to the music of the fairies."

A great change came over the face of the fairy as she heard what he said. The light died out of her eyes, and her smile faded away, as in solemn tones she answered: "The greatest sorrow that can come upon us will overtake us if you enter our Fairy Glen. I hope you will think better of it, and ask me for something else."

Turning to the two elder brothers she said: "At daybreak to-morrow, a boat, manned with trusty sailors, will wait for you both. Obey the instructions that will be given to you, and all will go well."

She waved her hand in token of farewell, and vanished.

CHAPTER III.

Since the day that Julian and Ronald had departed from their home, autumn had given place to winter, and grey old winter in its turn had become thawed by the genial glow of returning spring. By-and-by, the trees and hedgerows put on their gowns of soft, bright green. Among the foliage nestled sweet little buds, upon which trembled the early dew, sparkling in the sunlight like millions of diamonds, sapphires, and opals. The feathered songsters in the forests and hedgerows anthemed their joy at the gorgeous spectacle.

It was late in the evening of one of the brightest of these glorious spring days, that Jasper came out of the old hut and strolled upon the beach. The low murmur of the water, as it lapped the shore, was soothing to his ear. For a few moments he stood gazing at the distant horizon, where the sun was sinking lower and lower. The halo of burnished gold around it deepened into fiery red, and seemed to kiss the waters. Jasper gave a deep sigh; he was thinking of his brothers, and wondering where they were. He had fared badly since they left, having to do all the work, and catching and curing fish did not agree with him. As he stood looking down into the water, the old irresistible longing came upon him to enter the Fairy Glen.

"Yes," he said to himself, "I must go once, no matter what happens to me afterwards," and he walked fearlessly towards the glen. When he approached the stile, he seemed to hear again the gentle voice of the fairy queen. His heart beat faster, and for a moment he thought of retracing his steps, but he could not overcome the longing to enter the glen. He cleared the stile at a bound, and walked boldly forward. Presently he caught sight of a crystal stream winding in and out like a silver thread. Truly this was an enchanted forest, for the further he went the lighter grew his spirits. On he wandered, until darkness fell over the place, but no fears

oppressed him. The little glow-worms flitted about, the grasshoppers chirped, and the frogs croaked. Guided by the light of the glow-worms he walked on until he came to the stream, then he sat down to rest at the water's edge. Just at that moment the moon came out from beneath dark clouds. Its bright rays peeped through the trees, and flooded the scene with a subdued light. Shadowy forms flitted about the forest, and Jasper felt that he was not alone. On the stream were water-lilies innumerable. Presently the air vibrated with exquisite music. Jasper looked down the stream, and saw a boat composed of water-lily leaves coming towards him, propelled by beautiful water nymphs.

"Shall we dance a measure," said the Queen of the Water-lilies, "in honour of this daring stranger?"

"Yes, let us," said Lady Amber, and leaving their little craft they jumped upon a cluster of water-lilies; some danced upon the leaves, others gambolled in and out of the flowers, and others sat on the top of huge bulrushes, and sang:

Ripple and sing, oh! sparkling water,
Flash in the moon's clear light;
We have no sorrow,
No thought of the morrow,
We'll merrily dance to-night.

CHORUS.

Merrily dancing,
Souls entrancing,
We are gay and free;
Airily skipping,
Daintily tripping,
Happy little nymphs are we.

Silver and gold are not treasures we crave;
We have halls of sparkling light,
Where amber gleams
In steady beams,
And all our world is bright.
Chorus—Merrily dancing, etc.

Diamonds and rubies we do not seek,
They may stay in the earth's cold bed;
We have pearls so white
And they please us quite,
We have corals pink and red.
Chorus—Merrily dancing, etc.

At the shrill sound of a bugle the water-nymphs vanished.

Jasper waited a moment, and then went forward in the direction of the sound. In an open space in the centre of the forest he saw a lovely sight. Queen Amaranth, his fairy relation, was seated upon a magnificent throne of rubies and amethysts. Her gossamer robe was bordered with sparkling jewels, her crown glittered with the purest of diamonds, and in her hand she held a jasper wand, tipped with fire. On either side of the throne, dressed in fairy court apparel, stood the heralds who had blown the trumpet, and around the throne in a wide circle stood beautiful fairies.

"My subjects all," said Queen Amaranth, with great dignity, but in a sweet ringing voice, "the danger which I warned you against is with us at last. The cruel spell wrought by our arch-enemy, Queen Lotus, is working. Our fate to-night hangs upon a silken thread, and I beseech you to be careful. As you know, it was decreed that once in three hundred years my power should be withdrawn for a night, when if disobedience or dissension were found in our ranks, or if we entered into communication with mortals, our lives would be forfeited for ages and ages. Whether we win or fail rests with you, my subjects. I cannot command you to-night, I can only tell you that this is our night of darkness. Danger lurks on every hand. My mortal nephew is in the forest, and under the spell of the water-nymphs and the slaves of Queen Lotus. Love one another if ye ever did, and disobey me not, when I say, do not speak to this stranger. Farewell, and, remember, I rely upon you."

The silence was broken by a murmur of voices. Queen Amaranth removed her crown, and handing it to one of her maids withdrew into her arbour, where sleep overcame her. When she had retired, the fairies felt very sorrowful, for they loved their Queen.

"What is the use of being sad and mournful?" said Lady Emerald. "Let us be merry and mirthful, fairy sisters. Surely we can withstand the wiles of the stranger, and cease from quarrelling for a night."

"What shall we do?" asked Lady Sardonyx.

"Why, let us laugh and dance—dance round the fairy oak, as we have done many a time before."

The other fairies agreed to this. And as they danced they sang:

Dancing in a fairy ring,
Treading fairy measure:
We have naught but joy to bring—
Richest fairy treasure.

CHORUS.

We are merry little fairies,
Sporting in a fairy glen,
Dancing nightly,
Laughing lightly,
What have we but joy to tell?

When we're dancing on the moonbeams,
It is our delight,
Gems to shake in silver gleams,
Glittering in the light.
Chorus—We are merry, etc.

Then we dance on to a flower,
Sprinkle perfume in its bell;
Thus we pass a golden hour,
Hiding in its silver cell.

For we're merry little fairies,
Gaily singing as we go;
Dancing nightly,
Laughing lightly,
What know we of grief or woe?

They had scarcely finished singing the last verse when a gnome handed Jasper a flute, and bade him play it. Jasper raised it to his lips, and sounds came forth suffusing the air with a thrilling melody. The fairies listened and were spell-bound. Jasper, too, was quite enthralled by the music.

"What a sweet, well-favoured youth is he!" said Lady Beryl. "Do let us speak to him!"

"For shame!" said Lady Amethyst. "Remember the words of our Queen."

"But surely," said Lady Onyx, "there can be no harm in speaking to so charming a youth?"

"Harm or no harm," tartly answered the first speaker, "I mean to speak to him."

"You shall not," cried a chorus of voices.

"We shall," was the reply taken up by nearly half the group. "Who are you, that we are to be told we shall not?" And alas! they fell to quarrelling; angry words led to blows. They divided themselves into two parties, and fought vigorously.

The war lasted until the dawning of twilight, when the supporters of Queen Amaranth were vanquished. Then only did the enchanted flute fall from Jasper's hand, and he fell asleep. After the battle, the Queen, stripped of all her royal apparel, wearing only a fleecy garment, came forth from her arbour, wringing her hands and sorrowfully weeping.

She went forward to the fairy oak, where she had spent so many happy hours watching the graceful dancing of her subjects. The disobedient ones would have fled at her approach, but a figure enveloped in bright, fiery red barred their way. The Queen placed her hand over her eyes, as if to shut out the awful sight, and when she again looked at them, all had vanished, and in their stead great red poppies bloomed.

"Oh," she said, "that I had power but for a moment, that I might make them live again!"

She tenderly touched them, when, lo! under her touch, they bloomed into lovely spring flowers. Primroses, snowdrops, crocuses, and early daffodils, spangled the moss where they had fallen.

"Ah!" said Queen Amaranth, "be to mortals what you are to me, bright flashes of happier days; nay, be more to them than you can ever be to me. Hold out to them a promise of summer, when sunshine shall bathe the woodlands in pure soft light, and birds shall never weary of their songs from morn till night."

As she finished speaking, the wind moaned through the forest trees, and made a slight rustle among the forest flowers.

"Alas!" said the poor queen, "they bow to me. They still show me their allegiance. I cannot bear it." And she walked to the stream, and sat on the bank.

Slowly, very slowly, the water rose until it touched her feet, Queen Amaranth heeded not; gradually it rose higher, and higher, until it reached her waist, and then she gave a cry of pain, for looking down into the water, she saw that up to the waist she had become a fish. Her beautiful limbs and feet were gone.

When Jasper awoke, the midday sun was shining; his ideas at first were a little confused, but seeing the flaming red poppies he remembered all, and in a dazed, sorrowful way, staggered out of the forest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE years rolled by, and every spring-time a fit of great dejection came over Jasper, and a sense of his utter loneliness took possession of him. At these times he would wander into the Fairy Glen, and sitting under the old oak-tree, would in fancy live through the scenes of that night. He looked down upon the pretty spring flowers, for they never failed to bloom, and sometimes he fancied he heard the sweet voice of the mermaid sighing:

Ah! woe is me!

One day, nigh on forty years after the war among the fairies, Jasper was sitting in front of his old hut when he heard a horn blow, and looking seaward saw a magnificent yacht sailing towards the shore. The ship cast anchor, for the tide was low. The sailors on board lowered a small boat, and a party got into it. Jasper was greatly alarmed, for no human face had he looked upon since his brothers had left the island. The party landed, and made straight for the hut. They were his brothers, Julian and Ronald, and with them was a most beautiful young girl. Astonishment at the changes wrought by Time was great on

both sides. Jasper had become a bent, wrinkled old man, although he was but seventeen when they left him, and at sixty he looked old enough to be a hundred. They tried to persuade him to accompany them, telling him that Julian was a great statesman, powerful and mighty.

"What do I care for power and might?" he said, and looking at Julian continued: "It does not seem to have agreed with you, brother," for Julian, too, was a gaunt, thin old man.

"The cares of state are heavy on our brother," said Ronald. "But will you not come with us? I have the happiest home in all the world. This is my youngest daughter." And he fondly took the young girl by the hand and led her to Jasper.

She smiled winningly up at his wrinkled face, and said:

"Will you not come with us, Uncle Jasper? We will try to make you happy."

"No, my child," said Jasper, "there is no happiness for me if I leave this old hut and the memories surrounding it. It is kinder to leave me here."

The young girl looked at her father with tear-dimmed eyes; he fondly pressed her hand, and was silent.

When Julian asked Jasper about the fairy queen, Jasper told the pitiful story of her destruction, and the part he played in it.

"She granted our wishes, Jasper," said Julian, "and it would have been better for you had you chosen something also."

"I don't know," sharply retorted Jasper. "Are you quite contented, brother?"

Julian was silent.

"Wealth and power are not everything," said Ronald. "I wished for happiness, and my happiness is great."

"Yours was by far the wisest wish, brother," replied Jasper.

Julian and Ronald tried hard to persuade Jasper to leave the lonely island and go with them, but he refused to do so, and that same evening the yacht sailed away as it came. Jasper watched it gradually fading out of sight, and when it had completely sunk in the horizon, he covered his eyes with his hands and wept bitterly. Slowly he hobbled towards the Fairy Glen, and sitting on the banks of the mystic river, fell fast asleep.

"TUER LE MANDARIN."

Says Mrs. Edwards in her novel called "Ought We to Visit Her?"—chapter xxvii.: "Who would not sooner despatch an enemy by Sydney Smith's plan, ring a nice clean-handled little bell, which shall cause him to drop down dead in Japan, than by such disgusting open-handed means of destruction as a pistol or poison?"

More sayings and phrases, probably, have been erroneously fathered upon Sydney Smith than upon any one else; but it is an old story that to him that hath much shall more be given. When she wrote what has just been quoted, Mrs. Edwards had, of course, in her mind the well-known French phrase, "Tuer le Mandarin." But this does not owe its origin to Sydney Smith. Jean Jacques Rousseau has almost invariably—invariably, indeed, so far as the present writer is aware—been credited with it by all those who have quoted it or used it for literary purposes.

"Have you read your Rousseau?" asks Rastignac of Bianchon in Balzac's "Père Goriot."

"Yes."

"Do you remember the passage where he asks his reader what he would do if he had the opportunity of enriching himself by the death of some old mandarin in China, whom he could cause to die by simply formulating in his mind a wish to that effect, without stirring from his chair in Paris?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Bah! I have already got to my thirty-third mandarin."

Monsieur Auguste Vitu, in a short story called "The Mandarin," goes so far even as to give us verbatim, between quotation marks, the passage in which the phrase, or its idea, actually occurs:

"Suppose a mandarin in China, a man who lives three thousand miles away from you in a fabulous country, a man whom you will never see; suppose, again, that the death of this mandarin, of this chimerical man, will result in your acquiring a fortune to be counted in millions, and that all you have to do to bring about his death is simply to raise your finger as you sit at home in France, so that no one would ever have the slightest idea of your share in the matter; supposing all this, now, tell me what you would do?"

Monsieur Vitu does not, indeed, actually mention Rousseau's name, but that Rousseau is the "grand philosophe que les ignorants appellent un sophiste," from whose works the hero of the story is

reading this passage, "que je ne relis jamais sans terreur," is clear from his reference to the conversation between Rastignac and Bianchon in "Père Goriot." One would like to know the source from whence Monsieur Vitu extracted these lines.

Alexandre Dumas in his novel, "Monte Cristo," makes Monte Cristo say to Madame de Villefort: "Indeed, madame, this is a scruple which could not fail to present itself to an honourable mind like your own, but it is one which a little reasoning will quickly dispel. The baser side of human nature will always be summed up in Jean Jacques Rousseau's paradox—you remember it?—the mandarin whom you may kill five thousand leagues away by simply raising the tip of your finger."—"Monte Cristo," edition of Michael Levy, volume iii., chapter xiv., page 232.

"Père Goriot" was first published in the "Revue de Paris" in 1834 and 1835, and "Monte Cristo" was similarly published in instalments in 1845 and 1846. Monsieur Vitu's story was published not later than 1860. These dates are not unimportant. No one seems to have entertained any sort of doubt that this phrase "Tuer le Mandarin" was the invention of Rousseau. In 1873 we find it unequivocally asserted in Monsieur Larousse's "Dictionnaire Universelle du XIXme Siècle" that it is "a celebrated paradox of Jean Jacques Rousseau. 'If all that were necessary,' says the author of 'Emile,' 'to ensure our becoming the wealthy heir of a man we had never seen and whom we had never heard spoken of, a man who lived in the furthest recesses of China, were simply to touch a button and so bring about his death, which of us would not touch that button?'"

As we said in quoting from Monsieur Vitu, so we say again, it would be interesting to know from whence Monsieur Larousse drew this alleged quotation from Rousseau. It will be noticed that, while conveying the same idea, the actual words are very different from those which Monsieur Vitu gives us as a verbatim extract. Balzac and Dumas simply give us the idea, without pretending to quote the exact words in which it was couched.

And now comes the odd part of the story. The whole of Rousseau's works have been very carefully searched, and not a trace of any such phrase or idea as this of "Tuer le Mandarin" can be found anywhere in them. And here, perhaps, it may conveniently be mentioned that this fact was brought to the notice of Monsieur Larousse, who, having satisfied himself of the accuracy of it, inserted a note in a supplementary volume of the "Dictionnaire Universelle" which he subsequently published, that the statement in the body of the work which attributed the authorship of the phrase "Tuer le Mandarin" to Rousseau was a mistake.

Rousseau died in 1778, and the present writer is aware of no passage in French literature earlier than the one in Balzac's "Père Goriot" where the phrase is quoted. It would seem probable, then, that Balzac was the first to make the mistake of attributing it to Rousseau, and that the other writers simply followed his example. But where did Monsieur Vitu and the writer in the "Dictionnaire Universelle" get the text which they give as Rousseau's actual words? This we shall probably never know. Did they invent it? Perhaps they "restored" it from the bare phrase, "Tuer le Mandarin," as Professor Owen used to be able to restore the whole frame of some antediluvian monster from a few bones and teeth. But then Professor Owen did have the bones and teeth, but where is the bare idea in this case? There is not a trace, not a suggestion of it, in the whole of Rousseau's writings. But in one of the works of another French author, published not so very many years before "Père Goriot," we do get the very idea and the very words. On page two hundred and fifty-nine of the first volume of Chateaubriand's "Génie du Christianisme" occurs this passage: "O conscience! art thou but a phantom of the imagination or the fear of human punishment? I interrogate myself; I put to myself this question: 'If you could, by simply desiring it, bring about the death of a man in China, and enjoy his fortune here in Europe, possessing a supernatural conviction that no one would ever know anything of the matter, would you consent to form that desire?'"

The "Génie du Christianisme" was published in 1830, and in the passage which has just been quoted Chateaubriand writes as though his idea were entirely original and his own, and makes no reference to Rousseau or any other writer. There seems no other solution to the puzzle than that Balzac must have read this book by Chateaubriand, and, while remembering the general drift of the paragraph about the mandarin sufficiently well for it to recur usefully to his mind when writing "Père Goriot," not only forgot where he had really seen it, but imagined, mistakenly,

that he had read it in Rousseau. And it was his example which probably led astray the writers who followed him in attributing it to the author of the "Confessions."

The conclusion of the matter is that as far as the French language and every other modern one, at any rate, are concerned, there is really no ground for attributing the idea to any one but Chateaubriand, and his claim to it seems to have been here clearly enough established. "So far as the French language and every other modern one are concerned," we have just written; and we excepted the dead tongues advisedly. From Chateaubriand in modern Paris to Cicero in ancient Rome is a far cry; and yet it seems pretty clear that to the ancient rather than to the modern the germ idea of this "célèbre paradoxe," to quote the "Dictionnaire Universelle" again, is due. Turn to the "De Officiis," iii. 19, and there you will read, not the question of one who is fearful and doubtful of the answer he might return to it if it should ever be seriously propounded to him, but the high moralist's rule of life, sternly and unequivocatingly laid down. "And so," rules Cicero, "if it should ever happen that a good man have the opportunity, just by merely snapping his finger, of obtaining for himself the succession to a wealthy inheritance, let him not avail himself of it, even though he be quite sure that no one will ever have the least suspicion of the facts."

"Suum cuique!" And that must be our justification, if one be needed, for going into this matter at some length; and yet for many, perhaps, the wanderings and adventures, and final home-coming and recognition, of a disinherited and stepfathered quotation have an interest far beyond the material importance of the matter. And even now it seems as though one must leave the credit of the conception of "Tuer le Mandarin" divided between Chateaubriand and Cicero. How much of it belongs to each of them our readers can determine for themselves on the evidence before them.

BEWITCHED.

A STORY IN EIGHT PARTS.

PART VII.

VIOLET could not propose to go up to town with Arthur, or even to go instead of him, but neither could she lay aside her interest in the case. So she visited Miss Downing daily, in hope of tidings. The first news was discouraging and bewildering.

"I went at once to Scotland Yard, and found a so-called expert at handwritings. The man was an idiot. He declared there was no similarity whatever between Miss Boyd's writing and the writing of the forged letter. But his opinion is proved to be worth nothing, for he insists that I, and I only, wrote the forged letter. Of course I tried another man, but he said the same. They are a set of idiots."

Next day came another letter.

"I could not hang about London in this awful suspense doing nothing, and I thought I might find out something by going to look up Miss Boyd. Fate once more was against me. She is out of town."

This information lulled to rest a disquieting but unacknowledged suspicion; yet, even by the time Miss Downing had read it, her security was falsified.

Arthur posted his letter at Burlington House, and strolled towards Hyde Park Corner. He stopped at the Bond Street crossing to let a brougham pass. A face leant forward out of the darkness of the brougham, white and steel-eyed, and the swift, intent glance rooted him to where he stood for one dazed minute. It was Miss Boyd.

He walked on towards the Park mechanically, but it was growing dusk, and would be rather dreary, he thought. So he turned up Half-Moon Street instead of going on. He found himself in Curzon Street as if by accident. Why should he not have tea with Miss Boyd? She had returned to town, and had presumably gone home to tea. It did not cross his mind that the way to Curzon Street by Bond Street was rather roundabout. However, it could not have mattered, for when he reached Miss Boyd's door the brougham was just turning from it empty. She had gone round by Bruton and Hill Streets.

He was shown through an Orientally furnished hall, and a heavily perfumed and still more Oriental drawing-room, into a second drawing-room which opened upon a conservatory; all upon the ground floor. The rooms were all empty of inhabitants. The fires were newly lighted, and there was no sign of tea. Miss Boyd had, perhaps, not been expected to return so soon. He took a chair, a very low long one, almost a divan, and awaited her.

The room was very close and dimly lighted. There were too many heavy-scented flowers, and there were Indian rugs

and draperies, all redolent of the spice-laden East. The walls and tables were so crammed with carved wood and ivories, with embroideries, beads, and brassery, that the air seemed imprisoned among them. If Miss Boyd did not make haste, he would fall asleep. The lamps were shaded with crimson, and lighted but turned low.

He suddenly became conscious that he was watched, and, starting up, he saw her step softly forward in trailing, shadowy robes, pale-coloured, with a mysterious smile in her eyes, against a panel of brilliant light. He rose to meet her. She was coming from a third and lighted room, whose portière fell behind her, and she became palely luminous in the fainter light of the shaded lamps, and the draperies that had seemed shadowy against the shining doorway revealed themselves as a pink silk tea-gown with gleaming silver embroidery.

"How sweet of you to come!" she said softly.

"I called yesterday," he said. "You were out of town. I was so grieved. Now I am happy."

This was not at all what he had come to London to say, and he knew it as soon as the words were spoken, but it seemed so impossibly difficult to ask impolite questions of a woman who wore such a lovely gown in such a seductive room, and who looked so extremely pleased to see him.

She rang a little bell of singularly sweet tone.

"I am not going to give you tea," she said, "though one calls it tea for propriety's sake. I will give you what you like better—the best cigarettes you ever tasted, and Mocha coffee."

He was fascinated. She talked sweetly and unceasingly until the coffee was poured out, and the servant gone, and the cigarettes lighted; conventional nothings of weather and time. When it became his turn to choose a subject, it was more impossible than ever. He could not be rude to a woman who provided such coffee and such cigarettes.

She made no allusion to her letter which had lain so long unanswered; whether because his silence had hurt too deep for words, or because she had forgotten it, he did not even wonder. He had forgotten it himself, and he had forgotten why he was in town, except to fling a scornful mental glance at the absurd theories connecting her with the letters.

"What a pretty room!" said Arthur, laying his head back luxuriously and looking up at a panelled ceiling which would have seemed less beautiful in stronger light. "And so you live here, all by yourself?"

She sighed.

"It is lonely," she said. "You must come often. I am always at home on Tuesday and Friday evenings. You will come next Friday and I shall have some music for you."

"Next Friday!" He had some ado to collect his thoughts. "I hardly expect to be in town next Friday," he said. "I am waiting for letters. I cannot count on myself."

"Which of us can?" she said, laughing softly. "Unless, of course, we are permitted to read the future."

"And which of us can do that?" he said, with a groan.

"Would you like to read it—the next page or so—up to Friday, we will say?" she asked him earnestly.

"Indeed I should."

"I will tell you your fortune," she cried, with a sudden change of manner and a light laugh. "You don't believe in it, of course, but I am quite lucky in foretelling the future. I told lots of fortunes at Ruthyard Castle, where I have just been staying."

It was only for fun, of course. Of course it was useless, nonsense, but sometimes these things come true—and he was surprised and interested when she offered him a crystal ball to look into. He had expected cards, or a wheel of fortune. The ball was curious. He examined its luminous depths, full of magic kaleidoscopic figures.

How very curious! What was it really?

The ball grew brighter and brighter till it shone like a moon. The figures grew distinct and took shapes. The room became quite dark to him, though he never noticed it, and the crystal ball grew large. The figures were life-size, and one was Alice.

He gazed eagerly. She looked stern and cold, then averted her eyes and fixed them with a smile upon a man whose face he could not see. All at once another woman stood in her place. He had not seen Alice go, or the new figure come. He could not see this woman's face, but the scarlet dress seemed familiar, and she held a bouquet of white roses and carnations. Then again Alice was in her place. She looked sad and was quite alone. Then he found himself staring at impenetrable darkness, and heard

Miss Boyd saying impatiently, "It is a poor sort of trick, but rather amusing." The room grew lighter; she was turning up a lamp. He could not see what she had done with the ball.

"Can you not show me more?" he asked eagerly. "It is most interesting, but tantalising."

She laughed. "I could show you things that would make your hair stand on end, but I have not time now. You must come again—on Friday."

"May I not stay now?" he entreated. "Friday is so far off."

"No. I am going out to dinner, and I shan't be back till eleven, and of course that is far too late."

"Not for me," he said eagerly. "I will come at any time."

"You forget I have no chaperon."

He laughed harshly. "How absurd! As if you care for that sort of thing!"

"Somebody else may care—Miss à Court."

"What is she to me?" he cried wildly. "Haven't you shown me that she has forgotten me?"

"You have not forgotten her!"

"I have—she is nothing to me——"

"And yet you are dying to come to see her face in a dream? What falsehoods men can tell!"

"Not to see her—to see you," he cried frantically. "I cannot bear to wait so long—ah, Lydia, stay with me now. I cannot live apart from you. I cannot wait all through those hours."

He paused confusedly. In spite of the drowsy atmosphere of the dim room, the intoxicating fumes of the coffee and tobacco, and the strange influence that emanated from her presence, he heard vaguely as in a dream that the words which had gone from him were not from his heart, but from his lips, called forth by some spirit outside of him or floating about his brain. A strong, real longing seized him to get out into the light, to breathe fresh air, to escape from—something.

She took his hand in hers, and looked into his eyes.

"Are you mine, or are you hers?" she murmured.

Then a loud bell clashed upon the silence. She started. The mystery in her eyes was replaced in an instant by very human annoyance.

"It is the Charltons," she said, "and I am not dressed. Good-bye for the present. Come at eleven."

She did not push him out of the rooms; she only stood silently smiling, but it was a forced, anxious smile. The bell had rung all the mystery out of it. Yet when he found himself out upon the pavement, with dazed head and trembling knees, it seemed to him that he had left her presence by no will of his own.

He stood a few moments, while the cool night wind blew the clouds from his brain. There was a carriage at the door, and two feminine heads were scrutinising him. He became aware of them quite suddenly. "They think I am drunk, and have been chucked out," he thought. He pulled himself together, and walked on somewhat uncertainly. He felt queer and ill, but he remembered quite well that he had had nothing but coffee. "It must have been drugged," he thought, "or there was opium in the tobacco." He got into a cab and drove to a club in St. James's Street, whose hospitalities were for the time offered to his own club, which was under cleaning.

He pulled himself together with some potent tonic, and went into the dining-room. It was very full; members had returned, and guests were crowded. One man sat alone, dining on a steak at a small table. Arthur sat down opposite, and ordered a chop. The man received him with a start, and a glance of haughty resentment, such as one greets a fellow-passenger with who comes into the railway carriage later than oneself. Arthur did not care. The man was not of the club, but a guest like himself, he was sure. He thought he knew him, but could not for the moment give him a name. Some clouds still hung about his memory.

"It is Knollys, isn't it?" asked the man coldly.

Arthur admitted the fact, and tried to look as if he had known the man all along, and had selected that table for the pleasure of enjoying his society.

"Town's getting full, isn't it?" he said. "I hear the Teetotum will be open next week and relieve you of our presence."

"I am only just back," said the man. "I have been in Norway, you know, with the Kinnairds."

Arthur nearly jumped. Of course he knew him: Percival Grey.

"Why, I wrote to you the other day," he said, "at the Reform."

"I have missed my letters. I came back sooner than I intended. Had to see my father on business. Did you write

about anything urgent? Can I answer it now in person? We are private enough."

What had he asked him? He knew Grey very slightly. What could he have had to ask him? All he wanted to ask him now was—what was Alice doing? Was she unhappy? Was she thinking of him? Did she love him still or hate him? But it was manifestly impossible to ask these questions of a comparative stranger in a club dining-room.

"Are the Kinnairds quite well?" he inquired lamely. "I hear, by-the-bye, that you are to be congratulated."

Grey laughed, but looked inquisitive.

"I suppose you didn't write to me to ask that?" he said.

"I remember now," Arthur said hesitatingly. "It was not of much importance. I was told that you knew a person of the name of Virginie—I really forget the rest."

"Mrs. Kinnaird told me some story," Grey murmured apologetically. "Of course there was nothing in it—but if I can do anything towards clearing up what I am sure is only an unhappy misunderstanding, I need not say how glad I shall be. Pray look upon me as one of the family."

"How can I look upon myself as one of the family?" demanded Arthur dolorously.

"If I may venture to offer an opinion, it was some story about Virginie Vaucluse."

"A person of whom I never even heard," said Arthur.

"I was told that you had—in short, thrown the other lady over for her."

"I threw no lady over for anybody. Somebody had the impertinence to forge my handwriting—for a practical joke, I suppose."

"Virginie herself, perhaps. She is capable of it."

"Is there any such person? But I remember—you were said to know her."

"I know her as much as most people know her—in the way of business," and he laughed again. "It is not a very honest-dealing business, I fear. One hardly likes owning up to having mixed in it."

"What is it? Coining?" asked Arthur surlily.

"I suppose if she went to work on less magnificent lines it would be called fortune-telling. Ah! you do recall something," as Arthur started.

"No, nothing. Only something that—I was shown lately," he answered confusedly.

"Virginie," Grey went on, "set up last season in Bond Street as a palmist, thought-reader, hypnotist, and all that sort of thing. She charged a guinea for her lowest fee, and as very smart people went to her, and as she doesn't live in a cave or sit on a tripod, she is apparently beyond the reach of the law. Of course it is all humbug, but she finds queer things out now and then."

"And you think she could find out who wrote the letter?" Arthur asked, with new interest.

"I thought she was mentioned in it," said Grey. "I don't know the story completely, you know."

They withdrew to a quiet corner of the smoke-room, and Grey not only heard all, but was shown the letter itself, which Arthur kept by him for exhibition to experts and detectives.

"You are sure you did not write it, I suppose?"

"Absolutely certain, unless I wrote it in my sleep."

"And that you never heard of Virginie?"

"Never in my life."

"Did you ever wish very much to write it and were you prevented? It was possible to get up in your sleep to write it, if it had lain very heavily on your mind before going to bed. You say you were given the address for the purpose of writing to her, written on that very envelope."

"But I never dreamed of writing such a letter as that!" he protested. "I did intend to write, undoubtedly, but a letter all of affection—to implore her to forgive me, to come back."

"And what prevented you—the loss of the address?"

"Not exactly. I had not lost it—or discovered the loss. I wrote letter after letter, but I could not satisfy myself. My brain was overdone, you see. I had been working almost night and day. I suppose it made me irritable, and when the mistake was made about the flowers——"

"I did not hear the particulars of that."

Arthur narrated the incident in detail.

"May one ask who the lady was who sat for the picture, whose spell was so potently upon you that you wrote her name for another?"

"As ugly a woman as you could see anywhere." He paused and flushed. All at once he remembered what had happened that afternoon in Curzon Street: the crystal bowl, the strange fascination of Miss Boyd's presence. "She is a very strange sort of woman," he added dreamily.

"Well — and you wrote letter after letter," suggested Percival Grey.

"I wanted air and exercise to clear my head. I set off for a tremendous spin. I meant to write to Miss à Court when I got back, but I was stopped. Somebody asked me to dinner, I remember; the parson."

"Ah! I did hear of him—as the host of the lady who sat for Kilmeny and who stole the flowers."

"She was there of course. I had the address with me then, I am nearly sure. She might have found it—but why? I don't understand why."

"Mrs. Kinnaird implied that you had given her some reason to expect to step into the other lady's shoes. Pray be calm. We must solve the riddle. Well—you dined there, and I suppose returned to take your ease at your inn with the letter still upon your mind."

"No; I was too sleepy to have anything on my mind. They said I had fallen asleep in the back drawing-room at the Rectory after dinner."

"And next morning? Were you able to write?"

"Next morning I was as fit as a fiddle, and hadn't the patience to write. I set off to town to see her." He told Grey the rest

"I should like to find out from Virginie if she has ever heard of you," said Grey. "It seems to me that we are working in the dark until we dispose of her as a factor in the case. I will wire to her to-night, making an appointment for to-morrow. She is sure to be back in town by now. Get a good sleep to-night, your nerves have been badly shaken. You ought to have got rid of the effects of such overwork and excitement as you describe by now, yet any one would say you had seen a ghost this very day."

"I did see a very queer thing," said Arthur. "Did you ever hear of looking into crystal to see what the absent are doing?"

"A mere matter of thought transference," said Grey contemptuously. "I have gone into all these things at times. You don't see the absent. It is only suggested to you that you do. Virginie does the crystal trick among her other accomplishments. She will, no doubt, be happy to show you the writer of the letter in a crystal globe."

"I wish I had asked Miss Boyd to do so."

"Miss Boyd! Was it that Miss Boyd?"

"Yes; but there was nothing in my seeing," he said hastily. "Indeed, I saw her accidentally in the street, and I had not the least wish to speak to her till I found myself shortly afterwards on her doorstep. Then I suppose I meant to ask her if she had forged the letter, and didn't like. Don't look like that, Grey! I assure you I never once sought her society willingly. She is a plain, dull woman, though she can get herself up to look amazingly handsome in a dark room. Those back drawing-rooms in Curzon Street have no windows to speak of."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE following noon saw Arthur Knollys and Percival Grey winding their devious way through the smart Bond Street crowd to the modern witch's cavern. Certainly, nothing around conduced to illusion, the well-dressed men and women, the ranks of carriages, the brilliant sun of early October. Grey touched an electric bell beside a milliner's shop, and led the way up many stairs till they reached a curtained door. It was appropriately opened by a negress.

They were shown into a comfortable sitting-room, suggestive of Liberty's show-rooms rather than occultism. The negress took Grey's card to an inner room. Beneath his name was scribbled in pencil, "Mr. John Philipps."

"It will be something of a test of her powers, as well as of her truthfulness in ordinary things, if she discerns you under that disguise," said Grey. The negress returned and ushered them into the sanctum sanctorum.

This apartment was more dimly lighted. As Arthur entered behind Grey, he saw only a lady dressed in black rise slowly from a chair. Grey saw more. He saw a start, a falling back; he heard a catching at the breath. Then the lady rose again calmly, and said: "Why does Mr. Knollys try to hide his identity? I expected him."

"Miss Boyd!" exclaimed Arthur, surprised, but not at all comprehending.

"Miss Boyd!" echoed Grey, astounded, but perfectly comprehending.

"It is my 'nom de famille,'" she said coolly. "Of course, one has to have a business name like other people, authors, milliners, actors, and so on. Mr. Knollys only knew my real name. One can't confess oneself a sorceress in a country rectory."

"I don't know that," said Grey gravely. "I am getting mixed, but he had certainly heard your professional name before?"

"How so?" she asked, looking uneasy. She was evidently "off colour." She exercised no fascination over him whatever.

"We called to ask your assistance,

Mademoiselle Vaucluse," said Grey abruptly. "Where is that letter, Knollys?"

Arthur hesitated. It was an awkward sort of letter to show to a lady mentioned therein. He handed it to Grey.

"Did you ever see this letter before, Mademoiselle?" asked Grey sternly.

She was ready for it, and glanced at it carelessly. "Never," she answered. "It is not addressed to me—and is, I think, in the handwriting of Mr. Knollys.—Why!" she gave a little cry. "How did that come there?" pointing to the name "Virginie Vaucluse." "It must have been a slip——" she paused, looking very much embarrassed.

"You meant to dictate your own name, did you not?" said Grey sharply.

He saw it all now.

"Dictate my own name!" she repeated, more confused than ever. "Why should I dictate my name to Mr. Knollys? What have I to do with him? What do these accusations mean?"

She was so surprised and unnerved, that she gave herself away on every point.

"Miss Boyd," said Grey very seriously, "if you will confess all, we will forgive you. If you do not—well, there is a powerful and intelligent police in England."

"Police!" she cried indignantly. "How dare you so insult me? I have done nothing wrong. He is a weak fool. Anybody could have done what they pleased with him, without any occult gift."

"And so you made him write the letter—passed the words through your fingers from your mind to his while you had him in a magnetic sleep?"

"There is nothing dishonest or against the law in that," she said. "It is real. I learnt those things in India. I have my living to make, and it was the simplest way. It is only putting forth real forces. All the doctors admit such science now."

"Crystal bowls and palmistry?"

"Well, no; not those as yet, but it is a question of time. They fought against hypnotism and thought transference for centuries."

"Did I write the letter?" asked Arthur wonderingly, when they left her to the next client. She was in great request that day.

"Beyond all doubt. She hypnotised you and dictated it mentally; told you to sign your full name and put it in the envelope your aunt had conveniently addressed."

"Alice will never believe it."

"Alice would believe more astonishing things than that to have you back again. If Virginie had had any real power to show you the absent, what a picture you would have beheld of dear little Alice as Elinor described her, sitting forlorn on an iceberg or something of the sort, weeping enough to melt all the snows of the Circle. It is all right, except that we cannot, as the law at present stands, burn Virginie at the Reformer's Elm in the Park. Never did old hag of Highland waste make more mischief. She will find herself in Holloway, though, before many months are over, if she disports any longer with crystal bowls."

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 304.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE is one place whither the first breath of gossip is certain to penetrate, and where it will as certainly be nourished into circumstantial evidence; namely, the kitchen or servants' hall, according to circumstances, of the subject of the gossip. Lady Karslake's servants knew a great deal more about her intercourse with North Branston than she knew herself, and the topic had been well threshed out among them while yet it was hardly full-blown in Alnchester. The subject was handled at Hatherleigh Grange with much enjoyment, but without malice. Lady Karslake, as has been said, was popular with her servants, and Sir William was not. Consequently it was the general opinion that the flirtation assumed was so natural as hardly to be reprehensible.

To this opinion there was one obstinate dissentient voice. Mrs. Pike, the woman who attended on Sir William Karslake, had been in his service for fifteen years; and length of service, though it had created in her no attachment to a master to whom she was neither more nor less than a well-tried machine, had developed in her a certain stern sense of loyalty towards him. It was Mrs. Pike's consistently expressed opinion that "such doings" were "scandalous."

On the afternoon of the opening of the Cottage Hospital, tea in the housekeeper's room had been highly seasoned with a detailed and vividly-coloured report of the doings of "my lady and the doctor" at a certain dinner-party at the Dean's; a report which had reached its present terminus through a parlourmaid and two footmen. Mrs. Pike had uplifted her protest and had then relapsed into condemnatory silence; and when the ringing of the library bell resulted in a summons to her from her master, she rose up from her place and departed with a forbidding expression of countenance. Her face did not soften as she went on her way, and when she came in sight of the library door she paused abruptly, and her thoughts became audible.

"He ought to know it!" she said half aloud. "Poor gentleman, and never there to see for himself!"

Then she knocked respectfully, and presented herself before her master.

Sir William was walking up and down the room with quick, rather uneven steps, and the face he turned to the door was slightly pinched, as though with pain.

"Get me those drops, Pike," he said sharply. "The old ones. Ah!"

He caught suddenly at the back of a chair, and then sank into it with a sound that was half a groan and half an imprecation.

The attack was a slight one, however; and half an hour later he was lying on the sofa looking worn and pale, but little exhausted. Nor was there any weakness about his voice as he said:

"That will do, Pike. You can go."

But Pike did not go. She stood where she was, her hands clasped rather nervously together, watching him with an undecided expression on her stern face.

"I'm afraid, Sir William, that you won't feel inclined to go out this evening," she said slowly.

"To go out?" repeated Sir William indifferently.

"Yes, sir. To the Alnchester ball."

Sir William had taken up a magazine, and he half turned his head towards the speaker as if intending to suppress unusual loquacity. But he did not take that trouble.

"I had no intention of going to the ball," he said.

There was a moment's pause, and then the woman spoke again:

"My mistress is going, I believe, sir?"

Again Sir William moved as if to utter a peremptory dismissal, and again indolence dominated the impulse.

"Yes," he said.

"Don't you think, sir, if you'll pardon the liberty in an old servant, that it's—it's unfortunate that my lady should have to go about so much by herself?"

The voice was hurried and uneven, and Mrs. Pike's fingers were locked convulsively together.

There was a silence—the silence of ages it seemed to Mrs. Pike. Sir William Karslake had lifted his eyes suddenly from his magazine, a curious keenness coming to his face in one swift flash. Then he lay motionless. At last he said:

"Why 'unfortunate,' Pike?"

His tone was so quiet that a certain measure of reassurance came to Mrs. Pike, and she went on with nervous eagerness.

"My lady is but young, sir!" she said. "And ladies like her don't always think too much of what they do and say! And people are very quick to talk, Sir William, if I may take the liberty of reminding you, and—and—it's that young doctor, sir, Dr. Branston, that ought to have a horsewhip took to him, in my opinion."

The magazine sank in Sir William's hands slowly, very slowly, until it lay beside him on the sofa. His face for one moment might have been carved out of grey stone, so livid a pallor had descended upon it, and so utterly expressionless was it. Then into his eyes there crept gradually an expression so strange, so cynical in its slow acceptance of the idea thus placed before him as to be wholly indescribable. There was only one thing distinct and definite to be stated of his face at that moment. It was not the face of a man confronted by a confirmation of any previous suspicion, but of a man confronted with an entirely new idea.

How long she stood there rooted to the ground Mrs. Pike could never have told. She only knew that the moment at last arrived when Sir William rose slowly from his sofa, and motioned her towards the door, and that she left the room as fast as her shaking limbs could carry her.

It was within a few minutes of the dinner-hour when Lady Karslake came into the drawing-room that evening. She had reached home late, and had spent the intervening time in her own room.

"I felt lazy," she declared gaily as she entered the drawing-room. "I required a book and a little fresh air, metaphorically speaking, to fortify me before I take another large dose of Alnchester! Have you been out, William, this afternoon?"

Her tone to her husband had never recovered that subtle something which it had lost on the night when he announced to her his dismissal of North Branston. Her voice had distinctly gained in indifference and lost in friendliness, and there was a rather chilly carelessness in her face. She came up to the fire, and stood with her hands spread out to the blaze.

Sir William Karslake was sitting in a large arm-chair a little to her right. He was unoccupied, but he did not move as his wife approached, except for the slight turn of his head which brought her within his line of sight. He was lividly pale—far paler than he had been just after his attack of the afternoon—there were odd lines traced about his mouth, and in his eyes, as they rested on his wife, there was a cynicism which was touched by something like malignance.

He made no attempt to answer her—a discourtesy which in so punctiliously courteous a man was somewhat noticeable. Lady Karslake, however, did not observe it.

"Alnchester, in crowds," she went on carelessly, "may be described as stuffy! From every point of view, stuffy. I'm not thoroughly sure that it is not beginning to pall upon me!"

"That is a circumstance greatly to be deplored."

Sir William Karslake uttered the words very slowly, and in a peculiarly dry and quiet tone about which there was an inflection which his wife had never heard in it before. She paused a moment, listening to its echoes in her memory, and wondering with a quick tingling of her blood whether it was her fancy that detected in it something approaching to a sneer.

"Oh, I don't mean that it's anything very serious!" she said with a laugh. "There are people here and there who entertain me exquisitely. A delightful old canoness was introduced to me this

afternoon, for instance, with whom I could cheerfully spend long days."

"May I suggest that the narration of these entertaining meetings, humorous as they are, unfortunately share the common lot in becoming slightly monotonous to the listener?"

That inflection in Sir William's voice—intensely, unassailably polite as it was—had developed strongly, and his wife turned to him with a swift movement, her head thrown back, her cheeks flushed. She looked at him for a moment in a most eloquent silence, and then, with a spirited, dignified gesture, she turned away and took up a paper which lay upon a table.

There was an interval of dead silence. Lady Karslake read her paper with a flash in her eyes. Sir William Karslake looked into the fire.

"I believe you intend to go to the Alnchester ball to-night?"

Sir William's gaze had passed from the fire to his wife's figure. Lady Karslake, however, did not raise her head.

"Yes!" she said coldly and briefly.

"I conclude you are not dressed?" he continued, surveying the delicate tea-gown which she wore with the glance of a man in whom a cruel instinct towards fault-finding is gradually becoming irrepressible. "Will you pardon my remarking how greatly I dislike the fashion of your present gown? It is a fashion, as I observe, which you affect."

"Which renders your dislike for it exceedingly unfortunate."

The rejoinder broke from Lady Karslake quickly and haughtily. The gong sounding at that instant, she turned impulsively, and moved towards the door.

The conversation at dinner, rendered necessary by the presence of the servants, consisted mainly of a suave monologue by Sir William Karslake, from which that covert sneer never wholly disappeared, and into which his wife now and again threw a brief, disdainful monosyllable. She had paid the slightest possible regard to his conversation, indeed, when dinner being nearly over, he said after a slight pause:

"At what time have you ordered the carriage?"

"At ten o'clock!" she answered carelessly.

He looked across at her with an unpleasant smile.

"That is early," he said suavely. "Half an hour later would have served our purpose quite as well. We shall only show ourselves, I conclude."

"I do not care to be late," she began, and then she stopped suddenly. "You don't intend to go yourself, William?" she said.

He smiled again.

"Yes," he said, "I do."

She shrugged her shoulders with a little gesture of amazement, but she said no more until the servants had left the room. Then she said, in a tone of quick remonstrance:

"Surely, William, you are being rather unwise. You have been warned so emphatically against this kind of fatigue."

Sir William leaned back in his chair and met her eyes.

"I intend to go," he said quietly.

"But why?" she urged, her spirit rising angrily under his gaze, though she could not have told why, and the colour coming to her cheeks. "You won't enjoy it, I am sure. And I hear that you have not been well, as it is, to-day. Really, it seems to me a most foolish proceeding."

Sir William Karslake rose deliberately.

"That I can quite understand," he said, with a polite irony that was more effective than any openly insolent speech could have been. "I regret very much to have to force my company upon you, but I must trouble you to let me judge for myself in the matter. Allow me to suggest that it is time you went to dress."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Alnchester Infirmary ball was an eminently punctual entertainment. The tickets bore upon them the words, "Nine-thirty to two a.m."; and from nine-thirty until ten o'clock the stream of arrivals flowed fast and strong.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Sir William and Lady Karslake entered the room. Lady Karslake had kept her husband and the horses waiting for nearly half an hour, and, to judge from the carriage of her head and the mutinous set of her mouth, she was far from feeling any compunction for that act of discourtesy. She was magnificently dressed, and if the extra moments had been spent upon her toilet, they had certainly been used to advantage, for she was looking singularly well. Her maid, however, could have said that the delay had been wilful and deliberate, and a perceptive observer would have added that it was to no detail of dress that her appearance owed its effect. There was a delicate tension about her carriage, a vivid fire of expression which made her appearance even unusually full of verve and brilliancy.

She glanced round the room with a little scornful curl of her lip—an expression which at any other time would have been a smile, half mocking and half amused.

"What a crowd," she murmured to her husband. "And what excruciating music! Is there any one one knows, do you imagine? Ah!"

The monosyllable was uttered in quite another tone. It was low, it was rather pleased, and there was a sudden suggestion of womanly waywardness about it through which her temper palpitated unchecked. She paused as she uttered it, and sent a friendly, familiar bow and smile to where North Branston stood leaning against the wall at a little distance. The she turned to her husband with a flash of malicious satisfaction in her eyes.

"There is Dr. Branston," she said carelessly.

Her husband's face was quite impassive—singularly so, in fact. His eyes had lost nothing of their strange expression, but he was less lividly pale than he had been earlier in the evening. He glanced across the room, and bowed politely.

"He does not appear to take much interest in us," said Lady Karslake. "I don't choose to be treated like that. Ah, Mr. Howard, how do you do?"

She lifted her fan as she spoke, careless of the two or three acquaintances who had joined them, with a gesture that North was obliged to obey. He moved slowly and came towards her. Before he reached her side Sir William Karslake had drifted a pace or two away, and was exchanging greetings and comments with some of his county neighbours.

Perhaps North Branston saw the movement, and put his own construction on it, for there was a slight shade of defiance on his face as he reached Lady Karslake. Perhaps Lady Karslake saw it also, for the little laugh with which she received him had a mischievous ring, touched with an excitement which testified to the unusual strain upon her temper and nerves.

"Why were you not coming to speak to me?" she demanded imperiously. "Did you gather from my appearance that I am in a very bad temper? Well, I am! I feel—inclined to scratch—do you know? Shall you mind if I scratch you?"

"I don't think the operation would be formidable," returned North with a smile.

"That's because you are a man! As a matter of fact it would be horrid! What sort of floor is this, Dr. Branston?"

North glanced at it rather dubiously.

"I believe it's pretty good," he said. "Do you want to dance, Lady Karslake?"

"Is that your form of invitation, Dr. Branston? It is characteristic at least. Yes, I believe I do want to dance. I think it might do me good. Is the next a waltz? You may have it."

And the music bursting forth vociferously at the moment, she slipped her hand into his arm, let him lead her farther into the room, and in a moment more they had glided away almost alone.

Alnchester looked on for the moment almost too wide-eyed to remember its manners.

Observation at the "opening" had developed the interest of the hour from a possibility to an actuality, and the night, with the opportunities which it was likely to involve for the accumulation of further detail, had been anticipated with considerable excitement. The appearance of Lady Karslake accompanied by her husband had produced an electrifying effect. Sir William Karslake was hardly known, even by sight, in Alnchester; one of the features of the situation was the fact that her husband never went about with its heroine, and was consequently in total ignorance as to her doings. His appearance at the ball, then, was fraught, for the penetrating spectator, with possibilities of absolutely breathless interest. Would Lady Karslake alter her demeanour towards North Branston for her husband's presence? And if not, how would Sir William take it?

The answer to the first question, implied in the spectacle of Lady Karslake waltzing with North Branston before she had been ten minutes in the room, was so definite as to produce quite a staggering effect. Town and precincts recovered themselves, however, almost simultaneously, and gave themselves up with a rush to the delightful task of providing an answer to the second question by personal observation.

There were very few elderly female inhabitants of Alnchester who could not have told at any given moment, as the night wore on, where the three personages round whom the sensation surged were to be found; and on the countenance of Sir William Karslake they would one and all cheerfully have stood an examination, though the differences existing between the respective readings of those courteously impassive features might have contributed to a rather incoherent result. The heroine

of the hour certainly gave their watchfulness the slightest possible trouble. Lady Karslake danced her waltz from beginning to end, and then, distributing careless bows and smiles to her acquaintances, commanded North Branston to take her somewhere where it was cool.

"My dear, I heard her myself!" said one agitated lady to another. "Speaking to him quite as if there was an understanding between them, and out loud, you know!"

An interlude, during which Lady Karslake strolled about the room with the Lord Lieutenant and chatted discursively with every one she knew, was looked upon as so obvious an attempt at throwing dust in her husband's eyes as to be almost an outrage; and matters were felt to have assumed a more seemly and open complexion when she danced three times in succession with North Branston, and then went to supper with him. To persist in ignoring the position longer would have been obviously futile. Alnchester did not attempt the impossible, and comments, whispered and audible, began to fly about like wild-fire.

"It's scandalous, my dear," murmured Mrs. Eliot, with lugubrious enjoyment, to Mrs. Bennett. "It's a dreadful thing to say but there's no other word for it. And so embarrassing. I assure you I've really been avoiding the Vallotsons. They must be so uncomfortable, you know."

Her companion grasped her arm excitedly.

"Look!" she whispered breathlessly. "Just look! They've just come back from supper and they're meeting Sir William face to face. Oh, my dear Mrs. Eliot, doesn't he look awful! If we were to walk just a few steps nearer we should hear what they say."

Mrs. Bennett's mild blue eyes must have been possessed of singular penetration to detect anything in the least awe-inspiring in Sir William Karslake's face as his wife, with her hand resting lightly on North Branston's arm, came gaily towards him. His handsome features were stamped with a suave, cold courtesy.

Lady Karslake's face was flushed and animated; her temper seemed to have passed into a species of mischievous enjoyment.

"Are you ready to go, William?" she said lightly. "I'm dancing this, and then I'm ready." And she passed on with a little nod.

"He said nothing," said Mrs. Bennett in an awestruck whisper to Mrs. Eliot, a hurried strategic movement having brought them within five paces of Sir William's elbow. "Oh, my dear, there's Mrs. Vallotson looking at us. I know she thinks we're talking about it. Dear me, I should have thought she would have felt it more than she seems to, judging from her face. Her own brother, you know. I think I ought to go and speak to her and tell her how sorry I am."

Mrs. Vallotson was sitting erect and composed against the wall at right angles to that close to which Mrs. Bennett stood. Her eyes were fixed on the two speakers, and there was a rather singular expression in their cold, black depths.

Mrs. Bennett edged her way round the dancers, and squeezed herself rather forcibly into the seat by Mrs. Vallotson.

"I see you've no one to talk to," she said comfortably, "so I thought I would just come and tell you how distressed I am! Such an uncomfortable evening for you, I'm afraid!"

"Not at all, thank you!" said Mrs. Vallotson calmly.

"Not—oh, I'm sure I'm very glad! People will talk, of course, and really—your brother—Lady Karslake—that is—the whole thing is so very pronounced."

"People are very ready to talk, as you say," was the composed answer. "I do not consider their talk of any great importance. I see that old Mrs. Ward has come back from supper, and I promised to go and talk to her a little."

Mrs. Vallotson rose as she spoke, and moved round the room. Her way led her directly past Sir William Karslake as he stood leaning against the wall watching the dancers, and as she reached his side she paused abruptly. He turned his head and saw her. The next instant he had moved with suave politeness, and was holding out his hand to her. There was a little smile in his eyes, and as she met them Mrs. Vallotson's colour stood out in great patches against a livid pallor.

"How do you do, Mrs. Vallotson?" said Sir William Karslake politely. "I am glad to have the pleasure."

Mrs. Vallotson did not return his greeting. She laid her hand in his with a stiff mechanical gesture.

"What are you going to do?" she said in a low, hoarse voice.

The smile in his eyes deepened as he watched her into a cruel significance.

"Do?" he said also in a low tone. "Oh, nothing! What is there to do?"

At that instant Lady Karslake and North Branston disengaged themselves from among the dancers, and came to a standstill beside them.

"Ah, Mrs. Vallotson!" exclaimed Lady Karslake gaily. "So glad to meet you! William, I am tired out; I want to go home."

"I am quite at your service," he returned blandly. "Good night, Mrs. Vallotson; good night, Dr. Branston." He turned, holding out his hand to the younger man; and as North, after an instant's hesitation, laid his own hand in it, Mrs. Vallotson turned abruptly and walked away.

TANJORE.

Miles of emerald rice-fields and waving palms surround the famous city of Tanjore, formerly the historic capital of an ancient Hindu dynasty, and for ages one of the principal political and literary centres of the south. The green plains of the fertile Carnatic sweep up to the crumbling walls which enclose the magnificent Pagoda of world-wide fame, and the gigantic pyramid towers above the sea of verdure, like some lonely mountain peak in a boundless wilderness. Through dusty streets of flat-roofed houses, in every state of dilapidation, we make our way to the Royal Palace, followed by an eager crowd of dusky Tamils, chiefly distinguished by an economical absence of costume, and chattering merrily in the musical accents of the south. The polished and cultivated Tamil language, rich in historical and sacred literature, shares the importance of Sanskrit as a medium of theological teaching, and only ranks second to Telugu, "the Italian of India," in harmonious beauty, a rare quality among the fifty different tongues belonging to the great Asiatic peninsula. The Tamil people originated from the Dravidian group, one of the three great divisions of the non-Aryan races. This nomadic tribe pushed through the wild mountain passes from some unknown region of Central Asia, forcing its way in a compact phalanx until a permanent resting-place was secured in Southern Hindostan, where a high state of civilisation was attained before the Aryan invasion. The national temperament steeped in tropical fire appears diametrically opposed to that of the subtle and taciturn Hindu of the north, and local ideas of art and architecture reflect the influences of other historic lands still further eastward, though the domes and minarets scattered broadcast over the northern provinces have vanished from the face of the southern landscape.

The Carnatic, or "Black Country," was the battle-field of Hyder Ali, who, with his French allies, fought against the English with varying success for thirty years; but on the death of his colleague, Tippoo Sahib, slain at the siege of Seringapatam, in 1799, the administration of provincial affairs was shared by England and her staunch native ally, the Nizam of Mysore, whose authority was recognised by the tributary Rajahs of the adjoining states.

In the year 1705 a Danish missionary made his way to Tanjore dressed in native costume, and by degrees overcame the scruples of the Rajah, who finally sanctioned the establishment of the Christian mission. The New Testament was translated into Tamil, and several native congregations of baptized converts grew up in the kingdom of Tanjore. After the English conquests under Clive, Schwartz, an eminent army chaplain whose zeal for missions was equalled by his courage and daring in the exercise of his calling on the battle-field, was requested by the Rajah to reside at Tanjore, where the native Princes paid involuntary homage to the disinterested character of the European pastor. "Let them send the Christian, he will not deceive us," said the Tamil chieftains, with reference to a proposed treaty which excited their suspicions. On two occasions, when the Fort of Tanjore was threatened with famine and the Rajah was powerless to avert the evil, the Christian missionary succeeded in saving the inmates from starvation, and was appointed by the Rajah on his death-bed as guardian to his infant son. Schwartz died in 1798, after half a century of labour in the southern vineyard which bore him such abundant fruit. A wail of lamentation echoed through the land, and the young Rajah, to whom "the father of the people" had in a special manner discharged the sacred duties of a parent, shed floods of tears over the body of his benefactor, and, kneeling before the coffin, covered it with a gorgeous pall of costliest cloth of gold. The British Government provides a pension of one thousand two hundred pounds per annum to the eight widows of the last Rajah, as an indemnity for losses sustained by the transference of power. This happy family still occupies the Zenana of the Royal Palace, a barbaric pile painted in alternate layers of red and yellow, and

adorned with weird frescoes, sacred scrolls, and grotesque images. Two elephants stand in a corner of the deserted quadrangle, feeding on a pile of green branches lying on the broken pavement, and a brown mahout dusts a scarlet howdah with a bunch of peacock's feathers, the embroidered trappings thrown carelessly on the marble steps of a long colonnade. The ground floor of the Palace is used for Government offices, and in the great court, formerly filled on state occasions by ranks of elephants trained to salute the Rajah by elevating their trunks in prompt obedience to the word of command, tall weeds push through the crevices of the crumbling stones, and moss chokes the trickling stream which drips into the basin of a sculptured fountain. A colossal marble statue of the last Rajah stands in the tesselated vestibule of the Durbar Hall, where a huge throne of glittering tinsel surmounts a raised daïs within a gilded railing. Countless mirrors reflect the rainbow colouring, and crystal lustres, suspended above the shining canopy, gleam with prismatic hues like showers of living light. A splendid library of Sanskrit and Tamil literature maintains the prestige of the distant days when the Court of Tanjore was a seat of learning to which Brahmin pundits, Hindu scribes, seers, astrologers, and fakirs flocked in innumerable multitudes from every quarter. An arched corridor contains a curious collection of antique portraits, painted in the archaic style which manifests the incapability of native genius to find adequate expression in pictorial art. Mental aspiration was deadened by the gross materialism to which Southern India reduces the mysteries of Brahminism; and the realism of Tamil thought—revealed even by the more sympathetic medium of sculpture—attains a climax in the grotesque delineations of departed Rajahs and Ranees who look down at us across the vanished centuries from the walls of the ancient Palace formerly filled by the stately pageant of an Oriental Court.

The magnificent Pagoda of Tanjore ranks as one of the noblest Indian examples of the pyramidal temple, which by the incorporation of foreign features renders the sanctuary of the south the connecting link between the architectural styles of India and China. Although the Brahmin caste is forbidden to cross the sea, the vicinity of the coast gave an outlook into a wider world beyond the Indian peninsula, and resulted in an unconscious interchange of ideas. The gradual moulding of thought into a new type of artistic expression always possesses an element of mystery, and the depths of the mental process remain for ever out of reach. As contrasting hues melt into each other through infinite gradations of tone, so mind acts upon mind until the vanguard of a race reaches forward across its own intellectual frontier, assimilating itself with prophetic instinct to a range of ideas which find their complete developement elsewhere. The great Pagoda of Tanjore was commenced on a well-defined and majestic plan steadfastly carried out with mathematical exactitude. Two magnificent courts add to the dignity of the noble pyramidal temple; the outer quadrangle, originally devoted to minor shrines and priestly residences, was converted into an arsenal by the French when they fortified the Pagoda in 1777, diverting it from the sacred use to which it has never been reappropriated. Near the arched gateway of the second court, five hundred feet long by half that width, stands the shrine of the bull Nandi, a colossal image of stone saturated with oil by some curious process which gives it the mellow tint and satiny smoothness of polished marble. The sacred bull dedicated to Siva occupies a stone platform approached by twelve steps, and canopied by a sculptured cupola supported on granite columns. Beyond the shrine rises the superb temple, an oblong edifice of deep red sandstone, with the huge gopura tapering up in fourteen storeys to the height of two hundred feet. The apex of the mighty pyramid, crowned by a richly-carved monolith weighing eighty tons, pricks the hot blue sky with a diadem of crimson pinnacles, and a sculptured world of gods, goddesses, heroes, sacred birds, animals, and symbolical flowers encrusts the entire surface of the stately fane. Passing through the cloisters, adorned with crude pictures of Indian heroes, and the ochre-stained blocks of granite which symbolise the creative power of the universe, we reach the shrine of Soubramanya, screened by a balustrade of carved elephants with men in fantastic attitudes sitting on their backs, or falling from their trunks. This miniature temple is declared by Fergusson to be one of the most exquisite specimens of decorative art in Southern India. A smaller shrine flanks the Pagoda on the other side, and the rich colouring of vermilion pyramid and granite shrine encircled by grey cloister and red arcade, and chequered with black shadow

and vivid light, borrows additional beauty from feathery palms and clustering banyans rooted in the broken pavement of the spacious quadrangle.

Two frowning forts and several smaller pagodas in shadowy gardens show the former importance of Tanjore as a religious centre, and a citadel of native power. The population of one hundred thousand inhabitants indicates the present prosperity of the ancient city of learning, situated in the midst of the luxuriant plain watered by the Kaveri river, which expands into a delta from whence a network of fertilising streams flows through the Carnatic by a complete system of artificial irrigation. Crowds of natives, with foreheads painted with the varying symbols of caste, traverse the palm-shaded roads which lead to the city. The Brahmins, traditionally sprung from the mouth of Brahma, are distinguished by the sacred cord which girds them; the Kshuttries or warriors claim descent from the arms of the Supreme Divinity; the Vaisyas, comprising the commercial, industrial, and agricultural classes, originated from his thighs; and the Sudras, or servants, including artisans and tillers of the soil, occupy their lowly positions in consequence of their humble birthplace at Brahma's feet. The four broad lines of demarcation ramify into numerous subdivisions, below which stands the nameless herd of Pariahs or outcasts.

Poverty is often allied to purity of caste, and Brahmin sits side by side with Pariah in the railway, which proves the most formidable antagonist of the ancient social system in historic India, but the mould which shaped the complex types of Hindu life and thought has hardened into an iron rigidity, and an occasional relaxation of the heavy yoke gives no assurance of any radical change in the universal law.

Tanjore possesses the distinction of being the original home of the Indian Nautch, born in the shadow of the great Pagoda, and still blending the religious associations of the mystic past with the passionate imagery of love, sorrow, and despair, woven into a thousand forms by the symbolical poetry of motion. The Nautch girls of Tanjore stand at the head of their profession, and no important function of the native Courts is considered complete without the presence of these ideal dancers, clad in filmy muslins and golden tissues clasped with jewels and roped with pearls, the costly tribute paid to their irresistible charms. The Nautch girls are regarded as a religious sisterhood, although in their modern guise religion has become divorced from morality. Educated under the auspices of the temple priesthood, and possessing the privileges of an official position, they were taught to read, write, sing, and dance, even receiving instruction in Sanskrit and religious literature when indications existed of superior mental capacity. The influences of religion, whether for good or evil, played an important part in forming the character of the dusky troupe which hung about the sacred precincts during the impressionable years of girlhood, and ancient India regarded the Nautch dancer with the reverence due to an inspired sibyl or priestess. At the outset of her professional career she goes through a symbolical marriage rite with a dagger. This initiatory ceremony admits her into the corps of dancers, and represents her right to defend herself from the manifold perils which beset her path.

The members of the choral band vie with each other in establishing the honour of their native sanctuary, and the Nautch girls of Tanjore, who in distant ages made wars and ruled conquerors, carried the fame of their great Pagoda to every Court of India, chanting the praises of the historic temple in the sacred legends which varied the monotony of the dreamy dance. The rhythmical movements and graceful postures possess the weird fascination of "woven paces and waving arms" with which Vivien cast her mysterious spell over the conquered Merlin, but the languid grace of the Tanjore Nautch soon sweeps into a very whirlwind of passion, and the audience hangs in breathless attention on every gesture, as the wild love-story approaches a tragic climax, or the storm of excitement dies away into the silence of despair. The serpent dance winding through a sinuous maze of gliding measures appears almost a transformation or reincarnation of the performer into the cobra which she represents. Instincts inherited from bygone generations of Nautch dancers combine with close observation of nature to produce miraculous results. The Nautch girl lives to please, and labours for that end with the success which attends the unwearied pursuit of one absorbing object. Universal influence and fascination still belong to her, though in a narrower range than of old, and the dancer of Tanjore who concentrates the whole force of her genius upon the requirements of her art differs as much from the ordinary Nautch girl of India as a masterpiece of Raphael from the signboard which swings

before a rustic inn. Every feature of her mobile face reflects the passing sentiment of the moment in the drama delineated with consummate skill; the dark eyes flash with fury, fill with tears, or melt with tenderness according to the exigencies of the varying situation, and in the nervous energy which throbs and palpitates through every vein and fibre of the elastic and exquisitely proportioned frame, the tide of life seems to glow through the veil of flesh like some mystic flame, burning in a crystal lamp. The Nautch girls form a distinct caste, and jealously retain their immemorial rights and privileges. They exercise their own laws and customs, with the independence of control gained by a wider experience of life than that permitted to their Indian sisters. Liberty often degenerates into license, and a virtuous Nautch girl, at any rate in modern times, is almost unknown in this community of proverbial frailty.

The property of the vagrant sisterhood always passes through the female line, to show that it was accumulated by the mother, and not by the father of the child, a necessary proviso in a calling which frequently secures considerable wealth to the class recognised as an indispensable element in the diversions of Court and camp, town and country, throughout the Indian peninsula. When the brief heyday of youth vanishes like a tale that is told, and the early maturity of the Nautch girl's beauty fades in the burning sun of these Eastern skies, she frequently returns to end her days in peace where the temple of her childhood stands unchanged amid the tumultuous years like a solid rock in a surging sea. Old associations draw her as with a magnet to the spot from whence she launched forth on that ocean of time and change, which at length casts her back on the foam of an ebbing tide. Henceforth her simple wants are easily supplied, and the store of costly jewels, probably kept in old pickle-jars and sardine tins, seldom sees the light of day. The feverish dream of actual life is over, compressed into a few short years of luxury and vice, and nothing remains to her but the memory of her former triumphs, and the spoils of conquest hoarded through the dreary years of the premature decay which succeeds the early ripening of tropical womanhood. The transient beauty and freshness of youth fade like the glowing petals of some gorgeous flower in the heated atmosphere of passion and pleasure inhaled by the dancing girls of Tanjore, who plunge into a vortex of dissipation on the very threshold of their erratic course.

In the musical accompaniment of the Indian Nautch, semitones are divided into demi-semitones by a method of notation unknown in Europe. The wailing melody of this fantastic division constitutes the special charm of the weird Oriental music, and the discordant shrillness of flageolet, conch-shell, and vînâ, is forgotten in the dreamy beauty of those ancient dances of Tanjore to which the barbaric strains adapt themselves with dramatic accuracy. Damadara, the highest authority on Indian music, describes the harmonic scale of seven natural tones as resembling the peacock's screech, the parrot's cry, the sheep's bleat, the crane's call, the koil-bird's note, the horse's neigh, and the elephant's trumpeting. The Golden Precepts of Hindu theology embody the musical idea as "the ladder of mystic sounds through which the human ear hears the sevenfold voice of God." These sacred maxims were originally engraved on metal discs above the altars of the great temples, and the poetical beauty of the phraseology testifies to the power of the native imagination which vibrated to the mystic harmonies of Nature, and recognised her as the chosen interpreter of Divinity, "the Voice of the Silence."

The following quotation shows the mysterious union which existed between religion and music in the early ages of India, and the intensity of feeling which realised the sacramental character of Nature.

"Listen to the Voice which filleth all, thy Master's Voice, the Sevenfold Breath of the One Soul, the inner sound.

"The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to his mate.

"The second is the sound of a silver cymbal awakening the twinkling stars.

"The third breathes the melodious plaint of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in her shell.

"The fourth is the chant of Vînâ.

"The fifth shrills in thine ear like the melody of the bamboo flute.

"The sixth changes into a trumpet-blast.

"The seventh vibrates like the peal of a lowering thunder-cloud, swallowing up all other sounds, which die and are heard no more.

"Thus shalt thou climb upward by the mystic stair to the Power Divine, and merge thyself in Him."

Dr. Monier Williams says that religion is even more closely interwoven with the affairs of daily life in the south of India than in the north, and though the faith of the people has lapsed from the comparative purity of worship inculcated by the Vedic hymns addressed to the great powers of Nature, the intricate theological system of modern times entwines itself with every fibre of the native heart.

On the waste of sand which borders the shrunken current of the Kaveri river, a grove of majestic Palmyra palms forms a long aisle of fluted columns beneath the green shadow of the sweeping fronds. Though all around looks parched and lifeless, the Palmyra strikes a network of roots to the depth of forty feet, absorbs the moisture below the surface, and yields a cool draught of sap, locally known as "toddy," and collected in earthen goblets attached to the tree. The Palmyra climbers, whose caste belongs to the "Sudra" division of the fourfold order, ascend thirty or forty trees seventy feet high every day to collect the sap for the manufacture of sugar. The Tamils dedicate the Palmyra palm to Ganesh, the elephant-headed god of wisdom, and designate it "the tree of life." Three quarts of sap are obtained daily from the full-grown palm, which supplies food, shelter, drink, oil, and fuel to the peasant, together with forage for cattle and implements of agriculture. The green plains beyond the belt of yellow sand show a succession of palm-fringed landscapes teeming with the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics, and enlivened by groups of dark figures labouring in the fields of rice and cotton which surround native villages of brown huts thatched with palm-leaves and walled with bamboo. The rustic life of Southern India retains the pictorial aspect of a pastoral age, and transports the thoughts of the spectator to the early days of the world's history, while the colossal proportions of the ancient temples familiarise the mind with the mighty dynasties of the heroic era which succeeded the golden age of peace and plenty. When the sinking sun floods earth and sky with amber light, the mighty Pagoda glows like a pillar of fire above the dark masses of foliage overshadowed by the massive bulk of the red gopura. The heavy scent of tropical flowers fills the air with magical charm, and the manifold voices of the buried past whisper their secrets through the evening breeze as it rustles in the thickets of sandalwood, and trembles through the feathery fronds of the swaying palms which stand like sentinels round the crumbling walls dominated by the historic Pagoda of ancient Tanjore.

FOLK-LORE OF PALESTINE.

THE peasantry of Palestine, like all Eastern peoples, are extremely superstitious, and some notes on the folk-lore of the present inhabitants of the Holy Land may be found of interest. Mr. P. J. Baldensperger has done more, perhaps, than any one to throw light on this subject, and we avail ourselves—with grateful acknowledgements—of some of the material he has gathered for the Palestine Exploration Society.

First, we find that among all the trees the olive is held most sacred, because it gives both food and light. The man who cuts down an olive-tree will have no peace for ever afterwards, and will not receive his punishment incidentally, but direct from God. The lotus-tree is held sacred because it is supposed to be inhabited by the mysterious "Welys," who will work woe upon a man who cuts one down. On Thursday nights these trees may be seen lighted up, so runs the superstition, and the music of the unseen spirits may be heard among the branches. The tamarisk-tree is also believed to be haunted, and to wail out "Allah! Allah!" when the wind stirs its leaves. The palm and the cactus are reputed to be of the same substance as a human being, because they have drunk of the water of life. On the other hand, the fig, the carob, and the sycamore are inhabited by devils, and must not be slept under—children especially being enjoined to avoid their shelter.

Stories of good and evil spirits abound—especially evil. The Jân are underground spirits, who have a Sultan, a Court, and regular officials, and who are reputedly just in all their dealings. Although spirits, they must get their food from human creatures, but they can only take wheat from the threshing-floor, or bread from the oven, when the owner omits to repeat the first sentence of the Koran. They are supposed to keep guard over the food-stores, and are particularly fond of the fire, which also must not be extinguished without repeating the sacred text.

Nothing can keep them out of a house but salt strewn around it, and women must never sit on the threshold, because the Jân live beneath. They are believed

to be fond of human company, and it is even whispered that they have been known to marry mortals. "A man in my service," says Mr. Baldensperger, "about twenty-five years old, would never stay out in the fields by night, because his Jânié regularly visits him, and he is very much afraid of her. Another man in my service had beaten his wife; she fell on the hearth, and immediately the Jân took hold of her, and tried to entice her to follow him to Egypt, as there they could live openly together, whilst in the Holy Land this is not proper." Evidently most respectable spirits these Jâns! We are not surprised to learn that they are believed to be Mohammedans, and under the law of the Prophet.

Quite otherwise are the Kirds, who frighten men into becoming confirmed stammerers; and the Mareds, who are in evidence whenever murder is committed. Caves are guarded by Rassads, who assume various forms, and sometimes no form at all, but whose special mission it is to watch over hidden treasure. The European archæologists and others who come digging about ruins and mounds, are believed to have some special charm enabling them to compel the Rassads to give up their hold.

The Karine is a female spirit who always attends upon women, sometimes for their good and sometimes to their hurt. Bad Karines sow discord between husband and wife, and effect other domestic mischief. A tradition runs that King Solomon once met a bad Karine, and besought her to give up her wickedness for his sake, which she promised to do if people would only carry a certain written charm round their necks in a leathern envelope. The terms of the charm are known, but of its efficacy we have no evidence.

Concerning Iblis, or the devil, they have many curious stories. Here is a specimen: One day two men were quarrelling, and one, using a common expression of the country, said, "Shame on you, Satan!" the other replied, "Satan is innocent here, it is you who quarrel." When the disputants parted, Iblis appeared to the one who had defended him, thanked him, and invited him down below, where he was entertained for three days and nights with the best of earthly food.

Here is another. One day Iblis sent his son with a flint-stone to an "assembly of honourable people," and told him to get the stone woven. Entering the room, he said to the people, "My father sends his peace, and wishes to have this flint-stone woven." One of the men who had a "he-goat beard" replied, "Tell your father to have it spun, and then we'll weave it." The son went back with the message, which made Iblis very angry. He told his son never to attempt to get the better of a man with a "he-goat beard"—called a Kusa—for "he is more devilish than we."

This is curious, because among the ancient Christians the devil himself was believed to take the form of a goat, and this belief probably emerged from the practice under the Mosaic economy of using the goat as a sin-offering. The separation of the sheep from the goats at the Last Day marks the goat as the emblem of sin. But why the devil should be afraid of a man wearing a beard cut like that of a he-goat is not very obvious. The subject is worth the attention of Mr. Moncure Conway, who is learned in devil-lore.

Mr. Baldensperger describes a sacrificial custom after the recovery of one who has been sick unto death, of which he has been an eye-witness. The relatives and friends, all in their best dresses, and the men with their guns, go to El-Khader near Solomon's Pool, where is an offering-place for both Mohammedans and Christians. A sheep or goat is killed as a sacrifice, and while it is being roasted the men fire off their guns for joy, while the women sing and dance in a circle. This is an example of a song for a man:

The Arab chief is sleeping,
All covered with a blanket,
And when his sleep has sweetened,
They tore their clothes for him.
The Arab chief is sleeping,
With his garments all loose,
And when his sleep has sweetened,
They tore their raiment for him.

And this is an example of a song for a woman:

She's coming from her father's house washed and tucked up,
And fears to soil her feet from the cemetery's dust;
She's coming from her father's house washed and cleansed,
And fears to soil her feet from the manure-heap.

Another custom is to vow the weight in silver money of a child's hair, to be given to the poor. The hair is allowed to grow for one, two, or more years, and is finally cut on a feast-day, when it is weighed, and the equivalent in silver distributed among the poor present, while a sacrifice is offered and eaten by the family and friends at the shrine of some holy man. Sometimes a child's hair is made into a bracelet and bound round its leg or arm as an amulet.

Belief in the evil-eye is universal

among the peasantry of Palestine. It is blamed for throwing down a horse, breaking a plough, sickness and death, the decay of plants, and every misfortune. One way to cure a stroke of the evil-eye is to burn a bit of the clothing of the possessor of it under the person who has been struck—the fumes of the burning rag carrying off the evil effect. Sometimes a lump of alum or a handful of salt will be burned in a pan until something cracks, while the patient is taken round the fire seven times; with the crack comes the relief. Mohammedan peasants will use a piece of tamarisk-wood, and Christians a piece of palm from the Palm Sunday celebrations, in the same way. To avert the evil-eye, blue beads are placed round the necks of children and animals, together with a lump of alum, accompanied by such a benediction as, "I encompass you with God," or, "May no evil touch you."

Blue or light-coloured eyes are popularly supposed to most frequently carry the baleful influence, and to counteract this, blue beads are sometimes worn. Cases are cited of men able to overthrow a carriage merely by looking at it, to wither up a bean-field, and so on.

It is said that the belief in the evil-eye, among Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans, is stronger even than their religious beliefs.

The peasants try to read good and bad luck from the colour and growth of a horse's hair. This habit they seem to have got from the Bedouin Arabs, but are not so expert in the signs. A chestnut horse, for good luck, must have either both hind-legs or else the near leg white. If only the off hind-leg is white that is bad luck. Then by the way the hair grows on the neck it is augured whether the owner will be killed by a spear or a dagger; and if a horse begins to dig with its feet, that means that the owner is soon to be buried.

A practice of the Christians of Mount Lebanon, of lighting fires on the Feast of the Cross, is explained as being in commemoration of the discovery of the true cross by the Empress Helena, who caused fires to be lighted on towers all the way to Constantinople, in order to make known the glad tidings to her son there.

Among birds, the swift is held the most sacred by the Mohammedans, because it is believed to visit the Kaabah at Mecca seven times a year; therefore it is lucky for the swifts to nest on a house. The pelican also is sacred, because, according to the tradition, it carried water in its pouch for those who were building the Kaabah. The turtle-dove is esteemed sacred by the Mohammedans because it wept when the Prophet left Jerusalem for Heaven; and by the Christians because it wallowed in grief at the foot of the Cross, and its feathers were stained by the blood of Christ. The hoopoe, say the people, used to have a golden crown, but was so hunted for it that it begged King Solomon to take it away, which he did, and gave a crown of feathers instead, wherefore the hoopoe is the King of Birds.

The raven is believed to be black because he was cursed by Noah for settling on a carcase when let out of the Ark. It is, therefore, the bird of mishap. The lapwing is also accounted unlucky in the morning. The hooting of a barn-owl near a house is a bad omen.

The lizard is blessed because she carried water in her mouth to quench the fire with which the Angel Gabriel was burned, but the stellio lizard is accursed, because at the flight of Mohammed it revealed his presence in a cave. The mule is supposed to have been stricken with barrenness for having carried wood for the enemies of the Prophet.

Bewitchment is firmly believed in, and many stories are told of the casting out of devils, an operation at which certain Sheikhs have to-day the reputation of being very clever. In Syria and Northern Palestine it is necessary for bewitched persons to pass over the sea in order to get rid of evil spirits; and in Gazal people throw bread into the sea as an offering to the inhabitants of its depths.

Charms are much worn. Besides the charm against the Karines, and the amulet of blue beads to avert the evil-eye already mentioned, there are numerous others. Thus the vertebra of a wolf is tied to the neck of a child as a protection against whooping-cough—surely not a more foolish custom than that said to obtain in Staffordshire, where, according to Mr. Thistleton Dyer, to hang an empty bottle up the chimney is considered an infallible cure for the same disease. The Jews are believed to be very clever in making certain charms, which are bought in the market, and worn either in a leather envelope next the body, or on the cap.

For the discovery of stolen goods, and the detection of criminals, they adopt methods not unlike what have been practised nearer home. Thus, in one part, the sorcerer brings a man, who must be named Ahmed Mohammed, binds a towel round his head, and

makes him look into a basin of water. The sorcerer then produces his magical books, and burns incense, which brings the Jâns together, whom he then asks, through Ahmed, where the stolen goods are and who put them there. This is, of course, simply a variant of the magic mirror superstition, and as to the virtue of names, we recall that in Cornwall a remedy for whooping cough is a piece of cake given to the patient by a married couple whose Christian names must be John and Joan. Other analogues might be cited.

Here is another case in which we have the idea of the Inkpool of India, another variant of the magic mirror. "On one occasion in Urtas, many years ago, three Sheikhs from the Hebron district were brought, one of them with long hair, who seemed the leader. They gathered all the Urtas people together on a house-top, had the place well swept, and burned incense while reading from a book. A young girl was set down in the middle and some ink being put in the hollow of her hand, she had to look into this and never look up while she was examined."

After a long cross-examination regarding what she saw, an adjournment, and a renewal of the process, the thief went in secret to the Sheikhs and offered to make restitution if they would break the enchantment. And this, we are told, is generally the case, the guilty conscience making a coward of the delinquent before the resources of magic.

They have books for interpreting dreams in Palestine—probably not greatly unlike those known to servant-galism at home—and they have processions and drum-beatings to produce rain, as they have in many primitive countries. In some mountain villages they ride a donkey on the wrong side and pour water when they want rain. Nevertheless, this is accounted sinful, and contrary to the teaching of the following curious legend. One day, they say, the Israelites complained to Moses that they could not have sunshine and rain as they liked, and they told him to ask God to give them the option. And God allowed it, so that whenever they asked for rain they got it, and whenever they wanted sunshine the sun shone. So the fields became beautiful with luxurious crops, and corn with ears a span long, but when they were threshed the ears were empty, and there was famine in the land. Whereupon Moses again prayed, and God told him to tell the people to plant gourds, and those who planted many had plenty, and those who planted few had few. And when the gourds were opened, they were found to be filled with large grains of wheat. And God told the people never again to interfere with His works, as He knew best what He did. And that is why nobody should now pray either for rain or for fair weather.

A strange tale is current in Palestine about the Turko-Russian War. It is to the effect that falcons were seen swallowing the bullets as they were projected from the Russian guns—the falcons being disguised Welys fighting on behalf of the Faithful.

North of Beit Nuba is a collection of flint-stones, irregularly distributed but very conspicuous. These are called the "Farde," or wedding procession, and the way they came there was this. One day a wedding procession was passing along as a woman was just putting her dough into the oven and taking out baked loaves. Naturally wanting to see the show, the woman snatched up her child and rose to go, but finding the child dirty, she wiped him with a loaf of bread, threw the bread away and ran out to look. But the sacredness of the bread made the whole procession, man and beast, turn into stones where they were, and where they remain even unto this day.

These are but a few of the gleanings from a field rich in interest for many besides the folk-lorist.

A CHAT ABOUT LAUGHTER.

The people who think laughter an ill-bred exhibition of feeling are among the most laughter-provoking persons on the face of the earth. I can think of no keener comedy than they would supply to the man who was privileged—the word is hardly apt, but it may pass—to follow them through their lives like an "alter ego." The effort at times to be true to their principles would be almost tragical; at least it is to be hoped so. And if they never broke down under the strain, they would deserve to be classed either as supreme in wisdom, hypocrisy, or idiocy. To which category the ordinary human being, even when a foe to laughter, belongs, it is not for me to say.

I have heard laughter mentioned in the pulpit almost as if it were a sin. "Did the Almighty send you into the world, my brethren, to go dancing, and laughing, and jesting down the avenue of time?" It

struck me, as it will, I think, strike my readers, as rather a silly question. It would have been fully as sensible had it been turned right about face: "Did the Almighty send you into the world to go weeping, and wailing, and sighing down the avenue of time?"

It may be taken for granted that all the faculties we possess were given us to be used. The man who never laughs cheats himself of something in his developement towards perfection—which, by the way, he has little chance indeed of attaining.

It would be easy, if it were worth while, to trifle with words and prove that man ought never to laugh from the day of his birth. The Thracians groaned over a newborn babe, and presumably tried to laugh when it died—either as an infant or a worn-out nonagenarian. But they were a very degraded, ignorant set of people, with no three-act comedies and no humourous papers. "There is no doubt," we have it on good authority, "that in man's primitive and wild state laughter was expressed by a peculiar gravity of countenance, as in other animals, who show it even to the extent of melancholy. For this reason I imagine that laughter not only came into the world after tears, but that a long time passed before it appeared." The same writer adds that laughter probably "originated in drunkenness." After this, it were simple indeed to show that the man who laughs gives himself away as a dignified human being.

But I, for my part, laugh at such reasoning. I cannot refute it, as I know nothing about the first fathers of our race except what I learn from Mr. Reed's pictures in "Punch." Here, to be sure, they are depicted as laughter-compelling, if not laughing, creatures. But they are of course done from mere conjecture begotten upon the fine instinct of a humourist's mind.

Our friends the pessimists may say what they please about the enormous misery of our lot, and the preposterous criminality of the laugh. They are not to be credited. There is as much laughter in the mean slums of Whitechapel as in the gilded chambers of Mayfair. It is not reality that is such a curse in nine cases out of ten, but the conception we form of it. Few of us want to be educated up to the groaning-point. It were the more foolish inasmuch as before our knowledge has reached that stage it offers us every inducement for noble and advantageous action.

Besides, the professional pessimist is as a rule such an amazing hypocrite. While lamenting the sad condition of the human race, he takes the shrewdest heed lest he himself shall come down in the world. I should expect to find him a terrible hand at a bargain, and to pass the church plate without putting into it even a threepenny-piece. He builds his theories on surmises, and where he is most positive he is most fallible. No one more than Schopenhauer enjoyed the dregs of the existence he vilified as not worth having; and it will not surprise me to hear one day that Hartmann—the later exponent of this misery creed—has died of breaking a blood vessel in laughter at the silly world which swallows so fast the pills of mortification which he amuses himself by contriving for it.

This brings us to one of the easiest explanations of the growth of laughter. What is more incongruous than that a man in comfortable circumstances, good health, and of sufficient intellectual and social ability, should spend his days in writing about the wretchedness of life? The more advanced the civilisation, the greater the number of incongruities. These sparkle mirthfully amid the duller facts of life. We hail them as gladly as we eat a good dinner, and they benefit us almost as much.

The sensible man will therefore welcome incongruity as he would a particularly palatable sauce. The viand to which the sauce is dedicated may not by itself be very captivating. But the sauce makes the difference.

I wonder what our friends who never laugh would have done had they been in Garrick's place one night at the play. The famous actor was in the midst of a tragedy when suddenly he stopped and roared with laughter. What was the cause? Why, simply this: "A butcher in the front of the pit, who had taken off his wig to wipe the sweat from his head, had placed the wig for a while upon his large dog, who stood facing the stage with his forepaws resting on the pit railings."

This is as good an example as could be found to contest the foolish assertion that all laughter has its rise in something inevitably lowering to human nature. It was pure incongruity.

The French tell us that "le rire est hygiénique." We knew that even before they made the phrase; but it is as well to have their confirmation of the fact. Salubrious! Why, of course it is. For what purpose else did our wise forefathers keep certificated fools to make sport for them at

their meals and in their intervals of business, or more methodical pleasure-seeking?

I suppose the words "laugh and grow fat" are commonly understood as a mere jest: a mild counterblast to melancholy. But here, too, there is more sense than one imagines. The muscles exercised by the laugher have a tendency to enlarge with use, as other muscles have. They may not develope actual adipose, but they certainly ought, in a measure, to increase size and weight, which seems to the common eye much the same thing.

There are, of course, many kinds of laughs, even as there are many different kinds of minds to evolve causes for laughter. One is unwilling to say aught in censure of a man predisposed to merriment. Yet it seems not altogether uncharitable to affirm that the laugher in excess is a nuisance almost as intolerable as the person who is perennially sour-faced. He cannot but be often out of season; a fact which sets him bellowing, like everything else.

The man who has a natural disability for pleasant laughter, but who laughs withal whenever he gets the chance, is a more endurable affliction. He as a rule, at such times, has the laugh left abruptly with him; and it soon, under the circumstances, forsakes him. The Greeks, when at the highest pitch of their refinement, did not like to be seen laughing; the facial distortion was a shock to their artistic natures. It may seem too bad to say that many men among us ought never to laugh in public until they have practised the habit of graceful laughter in private. But the Greeks would, if they were with us, go much farther than that.

Then there is the false laugh—something akin to the inelegant laugh. The man may be pitied who is condemned to exercise that in default of something better. It is so terribly tell-tale an exhibition. It hints at a nature steeped in duplicity and cunning, yet not sufficiently accomplished to deceive the world on all counts. "Let me see a man laugh and know at what he laughs, and I will write you down the character of the man," so one of our moralists has said. It is rather a searching invitation, and not a very attractive one either. It would be diverting to see the man with the false laugh put to this test in the presence of the moralist.

Either this laugh or the one mentioned before it may be identified with what Sheridan Le Fanu—most able of novelists—has called the "churchyard laugh." "There is," he says, "a churchyard cough. I don't see why there may not be a churchyard laugh. . . . If a man is not a laugher by nature, he had better let it alone."

Many will agree with Le Fanu in this recommendation. But it would be kinder to refer the man not "a laugher by nature" to his own apartment or some sequestered seashore. Demosthenes taught himself to become an orator by declaiming against the waves. The man who is not sure of his laugh may be counselled not only to take his looking-glass into his confidence, but to spend hours daily laughing in some sequestered open place. Nature and art together ought then to have an educative effect upon him.

There is also the laugh that is not an audible, echo-inducing laugh, but a secret, intellectual smile, which, like the humour of Addison, never fatigues.

This takes us at a bound into the best society on its best behaviour. One may doubt if such society is the kind of tonic for our cares or dulness best suited for the majority of us. But it confessedly has its charms. As a parallel to it, you may conceive a fire which glows, looks alluringly suggestive of heat and comfort, but which does not warm the blood. You may hold your hands towards such a fire, and affect to be cheered by it. But it will not toast bread.

Here I cannot do better than quote that much-calumniated man, Lord Chesterfield, whose "Letters to his son" are such precious reading, and who demands our pity for their futility, while at the same time he exacts our admiration for the fine prose he wrote, and our gratitude for his immortal picture of a man of the world as he conceived him.

"Dear Boy," he writes to the lad, "having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it; and I could heartily wish that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh, while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners. It is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit or sense never yet made anybody laugh; they are above it; they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. . . not to mention the disagreeable noise it

makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection, but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition, and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh."

This is a long extract, but I hope not unjustifiably so. In a subsequent letter, the same sedate aristocrat remarks that "a man of parts and fashion is therefore only seen to smile, but never heard to laugh."

Was there ever so chilling—and, one would suppose, so wasted—a piece of exhortation, addressed to a lad in his younger teens?

It is like breathing the air of Norway after six months of London life to turn from the Earl of Chesterfield to Fichte, the philosopher, and his opinions on this subject. I fancy a philosopher ought—if there can be any dogmatic ruling in the matter—to be even more above the bad habit of laughter than a wearied statesman and man of the world. Yet this is the eloquent German's definition of laughter.

He calls it "a means pointed out by the instinct of nature itself for refreshing the mind exhausted by long-continued fatigue, and in some measure enlivening its stagnation by the stirring emotion which it communicates."

This is distinctly comforting. I know not if he is right or wrong in giving nature the credit for the faculty, or if civilisation—which is quite another thing—may rather be thanked for the luxury. But he is right in regarding it as a stimulant. It is good for the body and thrice good for the brain. On this score it may almost be viewed as a divine institution. Worn-out voluptuaries and disappointed worldlings may, if they please, echo the words of Solomon, "I said of laughter, it is mad"; but we of the common herd know better.

The man who creates a hearty, wholesome laugh does as much for us as the preacher of a moving sermon. Nay, he often does more. For many will hurry to the source of laughter who would not stir out of their houses for the sermon.

A SENSITIVE PLANT.

A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I.

"You see, George—I may call you George, may I not?—you see the dear child is so sensitive, so delicately susceptible to every change of feeling in those about her, that if I were you—I don't wish to dictate to you, of course; indeed I do not exaggerate when I say that nothing could be further from my thoughts than any idea of unduly influencing you in the matter—but if I were you I should wait a little longer before approaching the subject with Edina. Let it dawn upon her intelligence gradually, if I may be allowed the expression; let her feel your intentions in the air before you startle her by putting them into words. Words, my dear George, are but a rude vehicle to convey the tenderest aspirations of the heart, and I feel convinced they would be powerless to move her; besides, she would never listen to them. She would be far too frightened."

"But why on earth should she be frightened? Is she so awfully timid——?"

"Timid as a startled fawn, yes. She cannot help it, and I think it very sweet of her. But she must be humoured. With such a nature anything like haste or abruptness would clearly be out of place. Give her time to get used to you; time, as I observed just now, to feel that there is something unusual in the air; and then it may be possible to put your proposal plainly into words without alarming her. Remember, she scarcely knows you as yet."

"Yet I've been here for a week, and seen as much of her as she'd let me. The question is, will she like me better when she knows more of me? I'm all for a bold plunge myself."

"I do not advise it; I am convinced that the effect on Edina would be most disastrous."

"But she knows the terms of my cousin's will?"

"Most unhappily she does. I consider that unlucky document the worst enemy you have to contend with. No girl of spirit can endure a marriage that is recommended to her by every consideration of prudence and good sense. It would be most unnatural that she should."

"But if she knows the terms of the will, she knows why I am here. If I don't speak to her soon, she may think I want to back out."

"And if she does think so, so much the better. She will appreciate you all the more if she does not feel too sure of you. Besides, to tell you the truth, I have taken a few simple precautions so that Edina does not at present associate you in any way with the man it is so desirable she should marry. Fortunately your name conveyed

nothing to her mind, as your cousin did not mention it in the letter he wrote to us on the subject, and she was not present when the will was read. That was why I warned you not to speak of your relationship to that most eccentric old gentleman, but merely to meet her as a chance acquaintance. That, also, was why we advised you to take rooms in the village rather than come direct to us."

"Then why didn't you tell me so frankly at once?" he asked, with a look of some discontent. "I might have spoiled the whole thing by a chance word."

"I could not take a complete stranger such as you then were into my confidence. It was necessary that we should risk something, and knowing how reserved our dear Edina is, we had little fear that you would so soon discuss any but general topics with her—especially as her father and I were always present."

"Yes," he assented thoughtfully; "you were always present. Perhaps that is why I seem to know so little of her."

"Under no circumstances"—Mrs. Trowbridge spoke impressively—"could you have known much of my daughter in so short a time. Have patience, George; win her confidence gradually; remember always that she is a very timid child, a most sensitive plant."

"I'll bear it in mind. And now I must be going. Is there anything I can do for you in the village? Any letters to post?"

"No, thank you. You will return at dinner-time as usual?"

"If I may, Mrs. Trowbridge." And raising his cap, George Langton strode off down the garden, whistling merrily as he went.

Then Mrs. Trowbridge rose from the low chair in which she had been sitting, and slowly returned to the house. She felt that she had done her best to guard Edina's interests, and had taken every precaution she could think of to prevent any sudden jar. She had prepared George's mind, and pointed out the way he ought to take; it was for him to do the rest; for him—and Edina!

Mrs. Trowbridge sighed, but not from distrust of George. She had only known the young man for a week, but already she felt no uneasiness about him. If only Edina—— but there was never any reckoning on Edina.

George, meanwhile, pursued his way down a shady path, till he reached a little wicket-gate that led into the fields, and thence to the village.

It was a glorious spring morning, and the ground was carpeted with cowslips, while under the hedge groups of delicate wood-anemones drew apart like high-born dames retiring from the vulgar crowd, and shy violets peeped forth warily from the safe seclusion of their sheltering leaves. Beyond the hedge a small copse showed a mist of budding grey-green against the transparent blue of the sky.

George, glancing towards it as he strolled across the field, was presently aware of fleeting glimpses of white seen through the trees; and paused for a moment to consider the matter.

"A woman's dress!" he muttered. "Is it—can it be—Edina, by Jove! and without her parents to back her! This is an opportunity not to be neglected."

He ran up to the hedge, found a convenient gap, sprang through it, and alighted within a yard of the girl, who turned composedly, and looked at him.

"Good morning," she said; her voice was a very pretty one, and she spoke with great deliberation.

"You look deliciously cool here," he observed.

"I am deliciously cool. My being here is a proof of it," she replied quietly. "You will agree with me when I tell you that I came here to avoid you."

"May I ask why?" George asked, colouring a little, not so much at the matter of the announcement as at the manner of it. "Have I been so unfortunate as to offend you?"

"You? Oh, no! It is not you in particular, you know, but you altogether. The whole position is wearisome and unpleasant; moreover, it is a false position, and I refuse to countenance it any longer."

"I dare say I'm awfully slow, but—I don't understand," slowly.

"Is it necessary that you should?"

"You are the best judge of that."

She was silent for a few moments, looking at him thoughtfully. At length she broke the silence.

"Do you want to understand?" she asked.

"Yes; I hate to be puzzled."

"And I puzzle you?"

"A little; yes."

"Only a little?"

"Only a little at present. Perhaps if I knew you better, you would puzzle me more."

"At present you only know me by hearsay. I never like people to form their

opinion of me in the presence of my family, for it is quite certain to be an erroneous one. Will you do something to oblige me?"

"With pleasure." He spoke with great heartiness.

"Then please dismiss from your mind any wandering ideas you may have picked up as to my character and disposition. My mother is a most excellent woman, but she is no judge of character, though she flatters herself that she is. I warn you, I cannot live up to her theories, and you must not expect it of me."

George began to feel a good deal interested. There was certainly more in the girl than her mother had led him to believe; and for the first time since he had learned the terms of his cousin's will, he found himself thinking quite indulgently of the old gentleman's eccentricities.

"I promise you, I'll be influenced by nobody's theories, but will study the subject for myself—that is, if you will allow me to do so."

"I could hardly help it, I suppose, even if I wished to. One has to resign oneself to the inevitable."

"And am I——?"

"The inevitable. Yes."

"But I understand from your mother——"

"Have I not already asked you to understand nothing from my mother?" she interrupted him, with a little air of dignity. "You do not know how often with her the wish is father to the thought. I am perfectly well aware—how could I fail to be?—of the object of your visit to this place. You have come to inspect me, and you are quite welcome to do so; I, meantime, shall have an opportunity of returning the compliment by inspecting you."

She spoke very quietly, and in a cool, matter-of-fact tone that George could not sufficiently admire; it was so utterly unlike what her mother had led him to expect.

"That's only fair," he assented, with a laugh, "but I hope you intend to do your inspecting in a friendly spirit?"

"There is no reason for unfriendliness that I can see. It is a purely business matter."

"Oh, I say!"

"Can you deny it?" and she looked up at him seriously. "The money will be yours if I refuse you."

He made a movement as though about to speak, but checked himself; and she continued without noticing the momentary interruption:

"But the land—I go with the land! No wonder you hesitate!"

"Who told you that I hesitate? I have come here at the first moment I could get away. I wouldn't have seemed to hesitate for the world."

"For fear of hurting my feelings?" with a scarcely perceptible elevation of her delicately defined eyebrows. "That was extremely considerate of you."

"No, not that exactly; but——"

"Then it was for fear of losing the property? Oh, don't apologise! I don't blame you, though I confess this explanation of your early visit is a shock to my self-love. Even stock on a farm may have self-love, I suppose? Such prompt attention to business is very admirable, no doubt, but scarcely flattering."

"You wrong me, Miss Trowbridge," George exclaimed, stung by her words, and the quiet contempt with which she uttered them. "That confounded will has placed me in a horrible position——"

"Thank you, Mr. Langton!"

"Now you know that isn't what I mean——"

"But I quite agree with you. It is a horrible position. Any man with a spark of spirit must feel it so."

"In fact, you think no man with a spark of spirit would ever have accepted the position?"

"I don't see how you could very well have refused to accept it without——"

"Discourtesy to you?" as she hesitated. "That was just how it struck me."

"Not altogether that, and as you had never even seen me—— but it is silly to talk of what you might or might not have done. You are here, and the mutual inspection has begun. How long is it to last?"

"If you like, I will take my dismissal at once."

"Oh, I wish you would!" There was unmistakeable relief in her voice, and in the beautiful grey eyes she raised to his; only for a moment, however, then her face clouded over again, and she said despondently: "My people would never let me hear the last of it if you were to go so soon. They would say I hadn't given you a fair chance—though you know that wouldn't be true!" with a defiant glance at him, as though daring him to contradict her. "What's to be done? Can't you suggest any way out of the difficulty?"

"I'm afraid not; unless——" he hesitated a moment. "It wouldn't do for

me to stay another week or so—just as a friend; with no ulterior views, you know—to throw dust in their eyes?"

"Lovely! The very thing!" she exclaimed. "Only it seems hardly fair to let you; such a waste of time, and——"

"Oh, never mind that! I place myself in your hands, and will help you out of the hole this wretched will has put you in as well as I can. When you think I've been here long enough to save appearances, I will tell your people we don't hit it off, and then there'll be no need to say any more on the subject. We're friends, then, on the understanding that we shall never be anything more. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes!" she said emphatically.

CHAPTER II.

NEARLY a week had passed, and Mrs. Trowbridge was radiant.

Nothing could exceed her satisfaction with the aspect of affairs, except her astonishment that it should be so satisfactory; for Edina and George seemed on the best of terms, and instead of the battle she had dreaded with her daughter, everything appeared to be arranging itself with unexampled tranquillity. Edina had never been so bright, or so attractive; and the worthy woman attributed her sweet unconsciousness entirely to her own wonderful forethought, and thanked heaven a hundred times a day that she had at once taken so sensible a view of the matter. For Edina was a difficult subject, and her natural perversity usually far exceeded both her good sense and her worldly wisdom. That she should thus easily fall into the trap so prudently set for her, and fall in love with the very man it was desirable that she should marry, was an altogether unlooked-for culmination of the maternal hopes and fears, and one for which Mrs. Trowbridge could not be sufficiently thankful. Undoubtedly George had taken her prudent counsels in good part, and acted upon them with most excellent results.

Oh, he was an admirable young man! and it was a fortunate thing indeed that Edina knew so little of the terms of his cousin's will; so that when at length it should be necessary to reveal his identity, she need be no more prejudiced against him than was absolutely unavoidable. Had she dreamed how much his future depended upon her becoming his wife, she would have been more than ever resolved to refuse the man her friends wished her to accept. How could she—how could any girl—believe in her lover's disinterestedness when he had so much at stake? Edina was fortunately ignorant—in her mother's opinion—that she was doing the very thing that it was desirable she should do; and Mrs. Trowbridge was quite ready to let well alone, and hope for the best. It never occurred to her to wonder at the girl's amazing stupidity in not detecting the dreaded wooer in this new acquaintance whom her parents made so extraordinarily welcome: for the excellent matron was one of those women who, having once made up their minds that such and such a thing ought to be, immediately conclude that it is; which simplifies life wonderfully. With them the wish is always father to the thought; and they can scarcely bring themselves to believe that anything that they greatly desire should be, has no existence save in their own too fond imagination. It was highly desirable that Edina should not suspect that George Langton was the man she ought to marry; therefore in the face of all probability, Mrs. Trowbridge was convinced that the girl was really as ignorant as she chose to appear. It was a conviction that pleased her, and did no one else any harm.

Meantime it must be confessed that, since the young people had arranged that George was to prolong his visit merely in order to throw dust in the eyes of the world, they were scarcely going the best way to work to secure that end. It would surely have been wiser to prepare the minds of Edina's parents for the final break by the display of a little temper, or—at the least—some mutual constraint; so that they might proceed with confidence to assert that they "didn't hit it off" to people who must already have seen as much for themselves. A gradually growing distaste for each other's society would not have been amiss, considering the end in view; and it was strange indeed that nothing of the sort should be visible in their behaviour. Even formal politeness—a cold and constant courtesy—would have had its uses; anything, in fact, would have been better than the pleasant, friendly, even confidential relations which evidently existed between them, and which were only too well calculated to mislead those who were unacquainted with the truth. It was all very well for them to be friends on the understanding that they would never be more to each other; but to those not in the secret, their growing intimacy seemed to admit of but one interpretation; and

without doubt the intimacy was pleasant to both, though each regarded it from a very different point of view.

George, at least, knew that it could not last. He had soon passed beyond the early tentative stage in which mere friendship could afford him any lasting satisfaction, and yet he was bound in honour to make no effort to win more. His peculiar position with regard to the girl, while seemingly making many things easy for him, had in reality placed insuperable obstacles in the way of his winning her; and now his own promise—spoken when he little thought what the keeping of it might cost him—had taken from him the right to try to do so. He had thrown away the possibilities of the future, and the present was all that he could now call his own. He would enjoy that present to the utmost, then, and let the future take care of itself. Time enough to think about its difficulties when it should be necessary to face them; in the meanwhile——

In the meanwhile he forgot everything but that he loved her, and that he must not tell her of his love.

And Edina?

Edina, without doubt, liked him, and the present was full of pleasure to her also; but if there were pain in it as well she hid it successfully beneath a frank gaiety of manner that if not wholly natural, was the very perfection of art. Possibly she felt grateful to him for having so readily consented to resign all pretensions to her hand; possibly she merely wished him to believe her so, and at the same time was not sorry that he should have an opportunity of observing how much he had lost. Mysterious are the ways of women, and a wise man does not readily flatter himself that he understands them. George was not very wise, and he thought it was extremely easy to understand Edina's evident joy and relief at his prompt withdrawal from the position her parents wished him to take up. Thus he was little likely to forget the promise he had given her; and, if he said nothing about drawing his visit to a conclusion, his silence was merely out of respect to her wishes—or so he told himself. It was for her to tell him when he had remained long enough for her purpose. He was in no hurry to go; and apparently Edina was in no hurry to tell him to do so.

He was still staying at the village inn; but he spent his days at the Vicarage, where Mrs. Trowbridge always made him heartily welcome; and his evenings at Edina's side, strolling up and down the pretty, old-fashioned garden, or singing duets with her in the dimly-lighted drawing-room. And any one seeing them thus constantly together would have thought that all things were working towards the desired end, and that the anxiously expected engagement was about to become an accomplished fact.

Mrs. Trowbridge was a patient woman. She waited a week after her confidential conversation with George without saying another word to him on the subject; but by the end of the week her patience was pretty nearly exhausted, and she began to seek an opportunity of cross-examining him quietly to ascertain how his courtship was progressing, and whether there were any probability of Edina's accepting him within the next ten days or so.

At length she waylaid him successfully as he was entering the garden, and addressed him at once in the tone of truly maternal interest that she always reserved for their private interviews.

"Of course, my dear George, I do not wish to be inquisitive—you know, I am sure, that I have the greatest confidence in your judgement and good sense—still, I cannot but feel that two heads are sometimes better than one; and that, in the event of any unforeseen crisis, my knowledge of my sweet child's character and disposition may well be of material assistance to you. Need I assure you that it is entirely at your service?"

"You are extremely kind, Mrs. Trowbridge——"

"Not at all, George dear, not at all. It is natural that you should wish to confide in some one, and in whom should you confide but in me—your loved Edina's mother? No one else could sympathise with you half so heartily; no one else could advise you half so well."

"But if I don't require advice——"

"Ah, do not say that!" and she laid her hand affectionately on his arm. "You do require it, indeed; though you may not yourself be aware how great your need is. Tell me all, George, and do not fear to weary me. Am I not her mother?"

"I assure you there is nothing to tell," he said impatiently. "You must give us time. You told me yourself to wait."

"True, and I do not imagine for a moment that you have actually approached the subject with Edina yet. It would have been most ill-advised to have done so—to say nothing of the indelicacy of such an

abrupt disclosure. But surely there have been signs; indications, if I may call them so, of the way the wind is beginning to blow, and of an approaching change of weather—you understand my figurative language? And I cannot but think that if you were to put me in possession of anything of any moment that has passed between you—any little sentimental passages such as might naturally occur under the circumstances without in any degree exciting Edina's suspicions—if, I say, you would be perfectly frank with me, I cannot but think my greater knowledge of the dear child's nature might assist you in forming a just estimate of her feelings, a most necessary task."

"It is one, however, that I prefer to undertake for myself," he replied. "I believe I'm pretty well qualified to do it."

"Then you are quite satisfied? You feel no anxiety as to the result?"

"None whatever. It is a foregone conclusion."

"You and dear Edina certainly seem to be on the happiest terms. No one seeing you together could doubt it. That is the only thing that troubles me; she is so perfectly at ease in your company that I cannot but fear——"

"What do you fear?"

"That perhaps she has not yet begun to think of you—as a possible husband, I mean."

"And perhaps, when she does, she may not like the idea," he said moodily, but with a conscientious effort to prepare the maternal mind as Edina would doubtless wish him to prepare it. "It is possible, of course."

"George! But I thought you said it was a foregone conclusion? That you felt no anxiety?"

"Nor do I." He spoke truthfully enough, or so he believed; for how could he feel anxiety when he had flung away hope? "But things may turn out in a way you don't expect. It never does to be too sure of anything."

"You are not like yourself to-day!" And she looked at him with some concern. "You are not disappointed in Edina, I am sure? You have found the dear girl all I said she was?"

"All—and more. But—we mayn't hit it off for all that—in that way, you know. However, there's no reason you shouldn't hope for the best, and—I see your daughter on the lawn, Mrs. Trowbridge, and I believe she is waiting for me; so perhaps——"

"Go to her at once, my dear George. I would not keep you from her for the world."

And George went.

How much longer would it be before he would have to go away together?

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Trowbridge was feeling extremely dissatisfied; three days had passed since her little talk with George, and even she could not be blind to the fact that things were not going so smoothly as might be wished with the young people. He was moody and preoccupied; and, though he was as constantly with Edina as ever, he no longer seemed to find any pleasure in her company. She, too, had changed, and in a way that did not tend to reassure her anxious mother. Her cheerful composure had given place to an almost feverish gaiety when Mr. Langton was near; she was exciteable, and quick to take offence where seemingly none was intended, and on more than one occasion high words passed between them, and they parted in anger, much to the poor woman's dismay. Apparently Edina was growing weary of him, and found his frequent presence irritating; and Mrs. Trowbridge began to suspect that after all she might have discovered the truth, and resented the trap that had been set for her. She determined to discover if this were so without loss of time.

Her trust in her own diplomatic powers was still unshaken, and she never dreamed that Edina might see more than she intended to show her. She approached the subject, therefore, boldly.

"What have you and Mr. Langton been quarrelling about, dear?" she asked.

She called him Mr. Langton in her daughter's presence, for prudence compelled her to reserve "my dear George" for moments of confidential familiarity. Edina looked up, her large eyes full of innocent wonder.

"Quarrelling, mamma? Do you really think I know him well enough to quarrel with him? Surely you forget how short our acquaintance has been."

"No, my dear; but you have seen a great deal of each other, and I thought that perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?"

"You had learnt to care for each other a little. No; don't look so indignant, my love. Such things have happened before now, you know."

"But not with a girl situated as I am,

surely? There is no reason in the world why I should care for him."

"No reason, Edina? He is handsome and amiable, and very fond of you."

"Is he?" with a little scornful laugh. "If he worships the very ground I walk upon, it can make no difference. You forget that a husband has already been provided for me—though he seems in no hurry to make my acquaintance."

"But we should never wish to force your inclinations, your father and I. If you really prefer George Langton to—oh, my dearest child, there is no reason why you should not follow the dictates of your own heart."

"In that case, mamma, I think I will not marry at all," Edina said quietly; and turning away she left the room, before Mrs. Trowbridge had time to recover from the shock those words had given her.

What was the matter with the girl, and what did she mean by raising her mother's hopes so high, only that she might dash them to the earth again? Mrs. Trowbridge felt very reasonably annoyed with Edina; but—had she only known it—she was not nearly so annoyed with Edina as Edina was with herself; and not with herself alone, but with her mother, with George, with all the world. Everything was turning out miserably, she thought; she had resolved to stop George's conscientious courtship at once, and she had succeeded only too well. He had agreed to play out the farce at her request, and somehow the play had become deadly earnest to her, while to him—oh, he must never guess the truth! He must never know how bitterly she repented her impulsive words; how willingly she would now have listened to the most passionate assurances of disinterested affection he could have poured into her ear! She loved him, and perhaps, if she had left things to take their own course, he might have loved her too. But instead of that she had taunted and insulted him; she had judged and condemned even before she had seen—far less heard—him; and he had met her unjust attacks with a generous tolerance not untinged with contempt. Edina's cheeks burned as she thought of that interview in the little copse, and of all that had passed between them; and she quickened her steps involuntarily as she walked across the sunny field beside it, so as to leave the scene of such painful recollections behind her as soon as possible. She was walking aimlessly, only seeking to avoid her mother, and any further discussion on the well-worn topic; and she certainly must have forgotten that George had taken that same path not half an hour ago, and might be expected to return along it presently after looking in at his rooms in the village.

The afternoon was hot, and Edina was tired; so she sat down on a mossy bank under the hedge to rest, and indulge in glowing visions of what might have been—always a sufficiently depressing occupation to those who are dissatisfied with what is, and in all probability will be. From these waking dreams she presently glided into a deep sleep, worn out with changing emotions and the effort of perpetually playing a part that was daily growing more unnatural to her true self.

She had not slept long, however, when she was aroused by the sound of voices close by. Two men were talking together on the other side of the hedge, which was already in such full leaf that though she could hear every word she could see nothing of the speakers.

"Then you're not going to create a vacancy after all, Langton? You must be a good deal more attached to that dingy hole of an office than most of our fellows, or you wouldn't throw up such a chance in a hurry. We made sure we'd seen the last of you."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but——"

"Oh, we'll say nothing about that! Your own disappointment must be a much more serious affair. What's wrong with her, George? Oh, don't look so confoundedly savage! Of course, we've heard all the story. Those things always get about. By Jove! if I were you, there'd have to be something very radically wrong with her before I'd give her up, but you always were a fastidious beggar."

"We don't hit it off, Ted, that's all. I'm too heavily handicapped by that beastly will; and as she'll have some money in any case, I'm out of the running. If she hadn't a penny in the world, I'd marry her to-morrow—if she'd have me."

"Then you do care for the girl?"

"Rather! But what of that? We don't hit it off, and so——"

"You won't be a ha'penny the better for that ridiculous will! I call it an awful shame after raising your hopes by dangling the money-bags before you only to snatch them away. It will be hard to settle down into the old groove again."

"It won't be particularly pleasant."

"And is there no help for it? You say you care for her, and——"

"I've given her my word never to bother her on the subject. The position is worse for her than for me."

"If she cares, undoubtedly; otherwise—I fail to see it."

"She tolerates me, that's all; for the sake of appearances."

"Then why don't you cut the whole thing, and come back to town?"

"I'm not due there for another week, and I promised to stay as long as she wants me. Don't attempt to understand the position, Ted. It's a complicated one, and you'll never grasp it."

"I'm not going to try, but it seems to me you've been awfully badly treated amongst them."

"It serves me right for accepting a false position—but there, say no more about it. If we go on to that gate, I can show you a short cut to Claybridge; for the road will take you miles out of your way."

"Thanks. I was trying to find a short cut when I met you, but these paths all seem to lead nowhere. Pretty country, though."

They strolled on, and the voices died away in the distance.

Then Edina rose from her seat on the mossy bank, and walked slowly to the stile that led into the field beyond the hedge; the stile across which George must presently return.

She was very pale, but there was a light in her eyes that seemed too full of intensity to be easily quenched even by the gathering tears; and though her lips quivered, they were parted by a happy smile.

CHAPTER IV.

GEORGE, meanwhile, having seen his friend on his way, was in no hurry to return. Dearly though he loved Edina, he found small satisfaction in her company, bound as he was to keep silence on all that lay nearest his heart. The position he had taken up so lightly was fast becoming intolerable to him, and at times he almost thought that it would be a relief to hear that he had stayed long enough for her purpose, and might at length explain matters as he deemed best to her anxious parents. Edina would be amply provided for in any case; his cousin—who had been fond of her when a child, though he had never seen his little favourite since she was seven years old—had taken care of that; and the mild old Vicar and his grasping, gushing wife would have to make the best of it, and get over any disappointment they might feel at the loss of the large fortune that—if Edina and he did not marry—was to be divided among various deserving charities. No, there could be no need for such a long delay. And his friend was right: the sooner he was back in town the better; and really, if she did not dismiss him before long, he should have to pull himself together, and give her a hint that the time had come for him to go.

And having arrived at this conclusion, he at length turned his steps in the direction of the vicarage; for he felt that if the moment of parting were really near at hand, it behoved him the more to spend the brief hours that yet remained, by her side. He should not be happy with her; he could not be happy away from her; and he walked slowly along the path, which he had traversed an hour before with his friend, in a very mixed state of feeling.

Then he reached the corner of the hedge, and the little stile that led to the vicarage fields and garden.

Edina was standing there, looking prettier than ever, though strangely quiet and subdued.

"I have been waiting for you," she said tremulously, and she laid one small ungloved hand on the stile as though to steady herself.

"I am sorry I have kept you waiting. If I had only known——"

"Of course; but you did not. You were with your friend——"

"You saw us?"

"No; but—I heard. Oh, don't interrupt me, please; and don't be angry about it! I was sitting under the hedge there, and fell asleep; and then—I heard you talking."

"Don't bother about it," he said hastily, as she paused. "It's all right."

"Yes, for I have something to say to you, and what I heard makes it easier. I have taken too much of your time, have been selfish, unkind—oh!"—with sudden passion—"when I think what I have said and done, and how good you have been to me, I feel utterly ashamed of myself. I have treated you abominably——"

"No, no, dear," he said gently. "There's nothing to blame yourself for. Things haven't turned out as was intended, that's all."

"But I do blame myself! I was unjust, and suspicious, and I wouldn't wait. I made up my mind to hate you, and——"

"And you succeeded? That was a little hard on me."

"I have been hard on you all through, in every way; I did not know it at the time—at least, not altogether—but I know it now; and I am sorry, oh, so sorry!"

Her lips quivered as she spoke; she

raised her beautiful eyes to his, and he saw the tears in them, and made a hasty movement towards her, but checked himself. He dared not try to comfort her, he dared not so much as take the small hand lying so near him on the stile, lest the strong impulse to take her in his arms and tell her of his passionate love should overpower him altogether, and make him forget alike her scorn and his own promise. He was silent, therefore, fearing that if he spoke at all he should say too much; but she little knew what that silence cost him.

"And now I want to tell you—to ask you——" she faltered, feeling that her task was an infinitely harder one than she had dreamed. "Oh, it has been all a mistake, and I think it's time we ended it."

"You wish me to go?" he said quietly "I have been expecting to hear this, and I think you are right."

She wished nothing less, but how could she tell him so in plainer language? It was evident that the language would have to be very plain indeed before he would comprehend it, so firmly convinced was he of her indifference.

"Yes, you are quite right," he went on, talking bravely for the sake of the girl who was wounding him so sorely, in order to put her at her ease. "We have taken every care to throw dust in the eyes of the world, and have even gone the length of quarrelling a little sometimes. We have saved appearances, and there's no need for me to remain any longer now."

"And you will be glad to go? Say so frankly!" she cried.

"You know that I cannot do that. Don't ask too much of me."

"And you will go without a word?"

"No, no; how can you think it of me? I'll explain matters to your people as we arranged. I don't think you'll have much trouble with them."

"Oh!" she cried impatiently, "how selfish you think me! I am thinking of you for once. Can't you—don't you ever think of yourself?"

"I daren't." His voice shook with strongly repressed passion. "You go too far, Edina. As you don't want me any more, I'll leave you at once."

He raised his hat mechanically, and turned away. His face was stern and very pale, and Edina knew that she must speak now, or it would be too late.

"Oh, George, come back!" she cried desperately. "I—I don't want you to go!"

He stopped at once, and looked at her—wonderingly, then eagerly; but he did not come back. He waited.

Edina's colour came and went; she blushed rose-red with a sudden resolve.

The little stile still parted them; she crossed it with downcast eyes and went towards him swiftly, her hands outstretched, her sweet lips quivering.

"I have come to you, George," she said softly. "Will you have me?"

And then—at last—he understood.

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Maori women must be very charming, and, in spite of our vaunted civilisation, it would be well if we were in some things more like them. Travellers tell us of their wonderful grace, which seems to be due to their love of bathing and dancing, and they also speak of their beautiful, soft, dark eyes and clear brown complexions. Besides possessing these outward charms they are distinguished with that most excellent thing in a woman, a soft, sweet voice, and also by their affectionate, merry dispositions. Men and women alike are remarkably good-tempered, and it is a curious fact that, in their whole vocabulary, they do not possess a single "bad word." Should a Maori be very much enraged with any one he will give vent to his wrath by calling him a cat, dog, bullock, or, worst of all, a "wild duck." Nothing more dreadful than this can be said by a Maori, and it is a thousand pities that our vocabulary is not equally limited in the direction of abusive epithets.

Mushroom Soup.—Boil one quart of thin white stock or milk with an onion, a stick of celery, and a carrot for two hours. Season the soup well, strain and thicken it with a little flour. Have some mushrooms (if you can afford it, a pound), washed and peeled, and chopped small. Add the mushrooms to the soup and simmer gently till cooked. If the soup boils at all fast, the mushrooms will break up and the appearance of it will be spoilt. Serve a little grated Parmesan cheese with this soup.

Fish au Gratin.—This is a convenient and tasty way of cooking any kind of ordinary white fish. Take about one and a half pounds of fish, one gill of milk, a dessertspoonful of anchovy sauce, a little cayenne pepper, one ounce of butter, and a few breadcrumbs. Boil the fish in salt and water till cooked, then let it get cold and take out the bones. Cut the fish into pieces. Thicken the milk with some flour, add the butter, anchovy sauce and seasonings. Stir whilst it boils for a few moments. Gently mix the fish in this sauce, and then arrange it in a fancy white china baking dish. Sprinkle breadcrumbs, paraley, and a little thyme over, put a few bits of butter on it, and bake for twenty minutes in a quick oven. This should be handed as an entrée.

Love at First Sight.—A romantic story of love at first sight is recounted from Vienna. During a recent review in that city, a young lady, daughter of one of the principal burghers, became enamoured of one of the privates. She gave her father no rest until he learned the soldier's name, and being an only child he humoured her whim. He paid a visit to the commanding officer, and he, nothing loth, ordered a parade of the men under his command, in order that the young lady might make her choice. After a short inspection, she exclaimed, "That's the man." "Franz Beothy," shouted the soldiers. And Franz Beothy was his name, and Hungary his native country. Franz was delighted with his conquest; but when Miss Frauenschatz and he were introduced, they found, to their horror, that he could not speak a word of German, nor she a syllable of Hungarian. The young lady remarked, however, that that did not matter in the least, as their hearts would soon learn to understand each other. The "Telegraph" correspondent, who sends this rather remarkable story, adds that Miss Frauenschatz has promised to study Hungarian, but on one condition, to which her bridegroom has given his consent, that the wedding will be celebrated this week.

Shellfish often cause illness and give rise to symptoms of poisoning. Mussels especially have been credited with giving rise to untoward symptoms, and shrimps have also been known to produce similar results. In such cases what happens, I believe, is the tainting of the shellfish by their having been taken from localities or places where they have absorbed poisonous matters. There was once quite an epidemic of poisoning cases arising out of people eating mussels which had been taken off ships' sides. Here the symptoms pointed to poisoning by the copper which the mussels had absorbed from the ships' sheathing. I remember, too, of cases of poisoning through eating shrimps which had been caught in the sand close by the exit of a sewer from a town. No doubt the animals had fed on the sewage and had become tainted even whilst alive. Such cases, it may be said, are not preventible, and perhaps, in the ordinary sense of that word, they are not: only the people who catch the shellfish might be duly instructed in the fact that they should be captured in clean fresh surroundings, and not taken from any place where they are likely to absorb injurious and poisonous matters.

*

CAULIFLOWER OMELET.—One cup of cauliflower cooked and chopped fine, six eggs, whites and yolks beaten separately, one small cup of milk, pepper and salt. To the well-beaten yolks add the milk, pepper, and salt, then stir in carefully the whites, lastly the cauliflower. Put a good spoonful of butter in the frying-pan; when it is hot, add the mixture, and cook over a clear fire; it should be done in about ten minutes; roll one half upon the other; take from the pan carefully with a bread-knife or pancake turner, and serve at once.

MAYONNAISE OF SWEETBREADS.—Clean and parboil one pair of sweetbreads, throw them into cold water for half an hour; remove the fat and skin and cover with fresh boiling water; add a teaspoonful of salt and simmer gently for half an hour. When done, stand aside to cool, and when cold, cut into thin slices. Rub the bottom of a dish with an onion, and pour in half a pint of mayonnaise. Place a thin slice of onion in the middle of the bowl, arrange lettuce leaves around it; mix the sweetbreads carefully with the mayonnaise, and put in the centre of the dish.

TO PREVENT MOULD IN JAM JARS.—One of the greatest troubles in preserving fruit in jars is to prevent the formation of mould on the top, and the consequent spoiling of fruit when it rises above the top of the syrup. A very effective, cheap, and simple device is a disc of thin veneer of wood, from one-sixteenth to one-twentieth of an inch thick, and from two and three-quarters to three inches in diameter for one quart jars, made from beech, birch, elm, or ash, as these woods have no taste or flavour, and will not injure the fruit. To use, dip in hot water to prevent cracking, slightly bend so as to slip down below the shoulders of the jar, and press down on the fruit, to allow the syrup to rise over it. The shoulder will keep it down in place. When you wish to use the fruit, remove the wood by running a fork under and picking it out.

A USEFUL GRAVY SOUP for a family may be made from this recipe Take the remains of fowls, joints, or bones of any kind, and two pounds of gravy beef cut small. Add five pints of water and bring to the boil. Skim thoroughly, add some salt, and skim again. Throw in a bouquet of herbs tied up with a bay leaf, and two onions stuck with cloves, a carrot, and any other soup vegetables you have by you. Simmer the soup for about six hours, strain off, and put the bones, etc., into a basin to be boiled again next day with more water.

IF rumour is correct, illness was not the sole cause of Arthur Shrewsbury's absence from the county cricket-field this season. So far as I can discover, the retirement of the finest batsman in the world may be attributed in great measure to the objection taken in many quarters to the slowness of Notts cricket. For the last two or three years the Notts eleven has been publicly ridiculed, even by its own partisans, and there is every reason to fear that this ungracious conduct has driven Shrewsbury from the cricket field. Gunn threatened to follow suit before the season closed, and he would have been well within his rights if he had carried out his original determination. Notts cricket is painfully slow; no one denies that. On the other hand it has the merit of being scientific—far more so than is understood by the boisterous and unsportsmanlike mob who howled the Notts men down whenever they appeared at the wicket. As a matter of fact, bowlers are as much to blame for slow cricket as batsmen. The former bowl for maiden overs, and, so long as they are not knocked about, dozens of professionals make a point of bowling straight and slightly short-pitched balls from which it is impossible to score with any rapidity. This is the explanation of a great deal of the uninteresting cricket which is now witnessed. As soon as we abolish the average hunting bowler cricket will improve; but then for this to be we want big-hearted men like Lohmann, and Lockwood, and Briggs, who are content to risk being hit in the hope of getting the man out.

TO TURN A JELLY out of a mould, take a basin of hot water, as hot as the hand can bear, draw the mould quickly through it, letting the water quite cover it for a second. Wipe off all moisture at once with a clean cloth, shake the tin gently to be sure the contents are free. Next lay a dish on the open side of the mould, reverse it quickly, and when the dish is on the table draw the mould carefully away.

BURN ALL KITCHEN WASTE as far as possible in the closed stove. This should be done regularly three times a day after meals. Draw the fuel towards the front bars, pull out the centre damper, place the refuse at the back of the grate, and, if necessary, place a little coal at the top. Whilst the refuse is being got rid of, open the kitchen window for a couple of inches top and bottom. If these directions are followed, there will be no disagreeable smell, whilst the rubbish is destroyed, and the dustbin will never smell nasty.

WHY ARE WE NOT ALL CORPULENT?—This is a question we find answered by the latest specialist in corpulency, a man who, in our opinion, has done more to cure this distressing incumbrance than all the other so-called adipose-therapeutists put together. We have Mr. Russell's new edition before us, entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), wherein he explains that many men can eat an abundance of everything and yet appear lean and hungry, while the next unfortunate cannot eat but scantily without building up a huge frame of unwieldy bulk. Thin persons, the author explains, generally have a very strong liver, which vigorously separates from the blood any superfluity of its fatty constituents; per contra, the liver of the victim to obesity is constitutionally weak, hence it fails, without assistance, to throw off the carbonaceous and fat-forming foods. The book from which we derive this information is published by Mr. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., who has succeeded in manufacturing a purely vegetable compound which has an almost magical effect in the reduction of unhealthy fat. Experimentally it has been given in large doses to those who only carry an amount of fat conducive to the proper production of heat, and the result is that the decoction will not have the remotest effect—not the slightest reduction of weight takes place, while in the case of a superfluity of unhealthy adipose tissue the individual frequently loses 2 lbs., and much more in serious cases, in twenty-four hours. We should have liked to have pursued this matter further, for it is far more interesting in our opinion than experimenting upon bees, rats, cats, and such like, for what may appear startling in the results of certain foods given to the smaller animals may not be so conclusive or applicable in the case of human beings. We can with pleasure advise our readers to get this book and read for themselves, and moreover no one can complain of the price, as it only costs four stamps.

The following are extracts from other journals:

GOOD NEWS FOR STOUT PERSONS.—It does not follow that a person need to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that any one can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but this is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14 lbs. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book (256 pages) only costs 4d., and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really well worth reading.—"Forget-me-Not."

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.—Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month, with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient, in some cases, may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending four penny stamps, a book entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), containing a reprint of Press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals—British and foreign—and other interesting particulars, including the book containing the "recipe," can be had post-free from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—"Belfast News Letter."

To Keep Children in Health, give them an abundance of outdoor exercise, fun, and frolic; make them regular in their habits, and feed them only on plain, nourishing food, and they will seldom, if ever, complain of lack of appetite. But keep them overtasked in school, confined closely to the house the rest of the time, frowning down every attempt at play, feed them on rich or highly-seasoned food, allowing them to eat between meals and late in the evening. and you need not expect them to have good appetites. On the contrary, you may expect that they will be pale, weak, and sickly. Do not cram them with food when they have no appetite for it—such a course is slow murder. If they have no appetite, encourage, and, if need be, compel them to take exercise in the open air. Do not allow them to study too much. In addition to ensuring exercise for the children, change their diet somewhat; and especially if they have been eating fine flour, change to coarse flour. Illness is the most expensive nuisance on the face of the globe. There may be instances where it makes people or children better, but generally it makes them sad, selfish, misanthropic, nervous, and miserable. The best way to make children happy and good is to keep them well.

Five Generations Living.—The four living generations of the Royal Family are exceeded by the family of Mrs. Hobbs, of Barnaboy, King's County, who celebrated her one-hundredth birthday on Wednesday, July 18th, and on that occasion there were round her members of her family to the fourth generation. One of her grandsons present is himself a grandfather, so there are now living five generations, thus making her a great-great-grandmother. Her five sons were all in the army, two of them were in the Crimea, and one in the Kaffir and Abyssinian wars, and she has five grandsons serving in the army. Mrs. Hobbs is in possession of all her faculties, except that her hearing is not good. Her memory of events which happened at the beginning of the century is wonderfully clear.

Plum Jelly.—Stew two pounds of plums (red if possible) with sugar to taste, remove the stones, and see that you have nearly a quart of pulp, etc. Stir in one ounce of gelatine powder, taking care that there is sufficient heat to dissolve it. Crack the stones, and remove the kernels, which should be added to the jelly. Pour into a wetted mould, and stand till cold. Serve with raw or whipped cream.

Fried Stuffed Tomatoes.—Choose good-sized tomatoes, allowing one to each person. Cut a piece off the top of each and with a knife hollow out part of the centre. Take some cold fowl chopped fine, season it well and mix it with a beaten egg and press into the cavity. Flour the tomatoes, dip into beaten egg, then into bread-crumbs two or three times, and fry in deep fat till cooked. The piece which was removed from each tomato should meanwhile be baked and served on the top of the fried half. Arrange on a d'oyley and garnish with fried parsley. The tomatoes may be scalded and skinned previous to stuffing if preferred.

Boiled Fillet of Mutton.—Take a good thick fillet off a leg of mutton, bone it, fill the cavity with veal stuffing, wrap it in suet paste, and boil it. Serve in the paste, which, when cut, will be found to contain excellent thick gravy.

Scrambled Eggs with Tomatoes.—Scrambled eggs with tomatoes make a nice breakfast dish. Cook together half a tin of tomatoes, one tablespoonful of butter, one saltspoonful of salt diluted with a little water; and, when this is boiling, stir in six slightly beaten eggs. Stir constantly, and add one tablespoonful of chopped parsley; serve with toast. Fresh tomatoes can be used instead of tinned ones, when obtainable.

A Nice Egg Supper Dish.—Boil six or eight eggs hard; when cold remove the shells, divide in halves, place in a vegetable dish, and cover them with a gravy made of a pint or less of milk, two tablespoonfuls of butter, a little salt, and thicken with half a tablespoonful of cornflour. Let this scald well before pouring it over the eggs. Serve hot.

To Wash an Eiderdown Quilt.—Mend the eiderdown quilt well, sewing the principal part of the stitching over again. Put into the tub by itself, with a lather of soap and warm water. Wring it out with the hands and repeat the process till clean, then rinse all the soap out with two changes of water, shake and hang out to dry. When dry, pull up the wadding gently with the fingers on both sides. Do not put it into a washing machine or wringer, for they would wring it all to pieces.

Washing Flannels.—Flannels and blankets may be soaked in water containing one tablespoonful of ammonia to each pail, and a little suds. Rub as little as possible, and they will be white and clean, and will not shrink.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

Bilious & Nervous Disorders,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,

Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,

Disordered Liver, & Female Ailments.

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.
The 1s. 1½d. Box contains Fifty-six Pills.

The SALE is now SIX MILLION BOXES Per Annum.

Prepared only by the Proprietor—

THOMAS BEECHAM, ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS AND PATENT MEDICINE DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

Towle's Pennyroyal AND Steel Pills FOR FEMALES

Quickly correct all irregularities, remove all obstructions, and relieve the distressing symptoms so prevalent with the sex.

Boxes, **1/1½** & **2/9** (the latter size contains three times the quantity). of all Chemists, or will be sent anywhere on receipt of **15** or **34** stamps by the maker. E. T. TOWLE, Chemist, NOTTINGHAM.

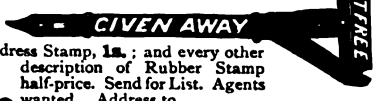
Beware of Imitations injurious and worthless

GIVEN AWAY!

REVULCANISED GOLD MEDAL RUBBER STAMPS.



Your Name, your Monogram, bottle of Endorsing Ink, two Pads, Box, and Brush for **9d.**, post free; with Marking Ink or Pencil, **1/3**. Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, **6d.** Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, **9d.** Watch Case, beautifully chased, with Name and Address Stamp, **1s.**; and every other description of Rubber Stamp half-price. Send for List. Agents wanted. Address to **Crystal Palace (John Bond's Daughter's) Gold Medal Marking Ink Works, 75, Southgate Road, London, N.**



CAUTION.—The Original and Genuine Ink Label has the trade mark, "CRYSTAL PALACE."

EXQUISITE MODELS. PERFECT FIT. GUARANTEED WEAR.



THE Y & N PATENT DIAGONAL SEAM CORSETS.

Patented in England and on the Continent.

Will not split in the Seams nor tear in the Fabric.

Made in White, Black, and all the fashionable colours and shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil. Also in the New Sanitary Woollen Cloth.

4/11, 5/11, 6/11, 7/11

PER PAIR, AND UPWARDS.

Three Gold Medals.

Sold by the principal Drapers and Ladies' Outfitters.

JEWSBURY & BROWN'S

ORIGINAL & ONLY GENUINE

Oriental

CLIMATE PROOF **Tooth** SIXTY YEARS IN USE.

CAUTION.

THE GENUINE ONLY IS SIGNED JEWSBURY & BROWN.

Paste

All Perfumers and Chemists. 1/6 & 2/6 Pots.

Ask your Grocer for

Crosse & Blackwell's

FRESH FRUIT JAMS & JELLIES,

which are made from Freshly Gathered Fruits and Refined Sugar.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, LIMITED.

SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

SULPHOLINE LOTION

SHILLING BOTTLES.

A Spotless Skin. A Beautiful Complexion.

PEPPER'S TONIC

QUININE AND IRON

2s. 6d. Bottles. Sold Everywhere

GIVES
Great Bodily Strength
Great Nerve Strength!
Great Mental Strength!
Great Digestive Strength!

Promotes Appetite. Cures Dyspepsia, Hysteria, Nervous Complaints, General Debility.

LIEBIG "COMPANY'S" EXTRACT OF BEEF

Is the finest Meat flavouring Stock for Soups, Sauces, Made Dishes, &c.

J. Liebig

Genuine only with Blue Signature across the Label.

Sole Manufactory: FRAY BENTOS, SOUTH AMERICA.

The Company's NEW COOKERY BOOK sent free on application to

LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT COMPANY, LIMITED,
9, Fenchurch Avenue, London, E.C.

F. M. EVANS & CO., LIMITED, CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

ORWICK'S BAKING POWDER. The best that money can buy.

Third Series

DECEMBER, 1894.

CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24, & Dec. 1.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 71.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Prisoners of Silence. A Serial Story ... 409, 433, 457, 481,	505
Slieve League	413
North-German Superstitions	419
The Broken Tryst. A Poem ...	419
A Cowboy on 'Change. A Complete Story	420
An Adventure off Cape Horn	423
A Double Trap. A Complete Story	427
Holborn	438
Paper	442
"If!" A Poem	447
The Classics in Education ...	447
Old-Fashioned Wit	463
Liberty and License	465
Blind Larry. In Two Chapters	452, 475
Ripple's Relish. A Complete Story	468
Bhopal	471
The Military Knights of Windsor	484
On the Gulf of Mexico ...	487
"Mr. Mortimer." A Complete Story	492
Family Rhymes and Proverbs	498
So Well Matched! A Story in Four Chapters	500, 525
The Devil Dance of Hemis ...	510
An Old-World Girlhood ...	513
Under the Yellow Flag. A Complete Story	517
Trade-Teaching in Germany	521

Price ELEVENPENCE.

1894. LONDON 12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C. Nos. 305 to 309

RIDGWAYS' TEAS. PERFECTION OF QUALITY & VALUE. KING WILLIAM ST., CITY, & BRANCHES. Also AGENCIES IN MOST LARGE TOWNS



BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH AND WASHING GLOVE.

Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion. Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED Rubber **Bath and Flesh Brushes**, price **5s.** each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON;

Ardwick. **Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.**

IZOD'S

LONG WAISTED. A GREAT SUCCESS.

THE LONG WAISTED.



200 Dozen or 2,400 Pairs of this Celebrated Make alone delivered this season in London per day. The great question of the day with all Ladies is the Fashion in Corsets, which grows year by year, until our special Artists have produced corsets for every type of figure.

IZOD'S CORSETS are cut on scientific principles with a precision of accuracy formerly unknown.

IZOD'S draw Ladies' attention to their Long Waisted Corsets, which have been designed by their British and Foreign Artistes, which are the best the world produces.

The Ladies' Tailors always recommend these celebrated goods for the elegance with which they set off a tailor-made dress, and create a long waist & graceful figure. They are made in a variety of qualities, and are beautiful and inexpensive. Every pair stamped on busk **Izod's Long Waisted** and also on lid of the box.

To be had of all drapers and Ladies' Outfitters in Europe, India, Canada, United States, Australia, the whole of the British Colonies, and throughout the world.

Write for our Sheet of Drawings.

E. IZOD & SON, 30, MILK ST., LONDON, E.C.

Manufactory: LANDPORT, HANTS.

IMPORTANT TO LADIES,

Especially to those who require an ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN and speedy remedy for all Irregularities and Obstructions, a Remedy which in thousands of cases has never failed to afford COMPLETE RELIEF, generally in a few hours. As Mrs. W. writes:—

"By adopting your treatment my anxiety and misery were over WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, although for over three months I had been daily taking pills and other things in vain. HALF THE QUANTITY YOU SENT ME PROVED EFFECTIVE."

Full particulars will be forwarded any lady on receipt of addressed envelope. The medicine is not expensive, as one bottle at 4s. 6d. is generally amply sufficient.

A SWORN GUARANTEE accompanies all testimonials and medicine. Write at once privately to

MRS. A. GREY,

145, STOCKWELL ROAD, LONDON, S.W.

HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT

Cures Sore Throat, Quinsy,

BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, INFLUENZA,

Chilblains, Scurvy, Eczema,

SPRAINS, BRUISES, CHAPPED HANDS,

AND EVERY FORM OF SKIN DISEASE.

SOLD BY ALL MEDICINE VENDORS.

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BOILING WATER OR MILK.

Don't Cough—just use

They at once check the cough and remove the cause—without any after effect.

The Unrivalled Remedy

One gives relief: they *will* cure, and they *will not* injure your health.

Keating's Lozenges

SOLD IN TINS 13½ EACH

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 305.—Third Series. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1894. Price Twopence.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It would hardly have seemed to an impartial observer, prior to the departure of Sir William and Lady Karslake, that their presence in the ball-room acted as much restraint upon the discussion of the sensation of the evening; but their absence, nevertheless, brought about a rising in the tide of excitement and gossip, as conspicuous as it was sudden. Everybody began to talk of the same thing at the same moment, and sundry glances cast at North Branston and at the Vallotsons seemed to imply that nothing was needed to Alnchester's felicity, but that they should follow the example set them and leave the field perfectly clear.

Such satisfaction, however, was not in store for Alnchester. North Branston had been observed, very shortly after Lady Karslake's departure, making his way towards the door; but his intentions were obviously frustrated by a brief word or two that passed between him and Mrs. Vallotson—who had met him, as it seemed, by accident—and he took up a position near the door evidently in indifferent waiting for his family parting. For more than an hour after this Mrs. Vallotson herself moved about the room, oblivious, apparently, of the blight which invariably fell, as she drew near, upon the conversations which she interrupted; her manner composed as usual; her colour still standing out in patches, as it had done when she met Sir William Karslake's eyes.

The room was thinning rapidly when Constance at last received a message to the effect that her mother wished to go. Dr. and Mrs. Vallotson were standing together when the girl joined them—the former excessively pompous and self-assertive, and inclined, like a child who has been too long kept from his bed, to be fractious; and as Constance appeared, North Branston came up to the party.

"I shall walk home," he said curtly.

"Are you starting at once?"

The words came from Mrs. Vallotson in an abrupt voice. North Branston answered only with a gesture of assent, turned on his heel, and departed.

If a regenerator of society may ever be said to wrangle, the short drive home was occupied by a wrangle between Constance and her father, over a trifling detail connected with the arrangements of the ball. Constance had been dancing all night, and presumably even regenerators are not proof against over-excitement and over-fatigue, for there was decided irritability in her voice and manner as she turned to her mother, when they stood in the hall, for confirmation of her opinion. Apparently, however, Mrs. Vallotson had not heard the discussion which had gone on at her side; she did not seem even to hear her daughter's final words.

She bent forward and touched the girl's forehead with her lips.

"Good night, Constance," she said. "Make haste to bed!"

"Far too opinionated!" ejaculated her father testily, as Constance disappeared. "Far too opinionated!" The dignity of this authoritative dictum was somewhat impeded by a vast yawn, and when speech was once more possible to him, Dr. Vallotson added with sleepy tentativeness:

"And now, my dear, we may as well go

up ourselves, perhaps? It's really very late. I don't know that I ever remember your caring to stay so long at the Infirmary ball. North will shut up. If you are quite ready, my dear——"

Dr. Vallotson was edging, as majestically as the action would allow, towards the staircase, when his wife's voice stopped him. She spoke suddenly, and with some violence.

"I am not ready!" she said. "There is something to be done first!" She flung open the dining-room door, turned up the gas, and turned to confront her husband. Her eyes were glittering; her colour was deeper and more patchy than ever, and her lips were tightly compressed.

Dr. Vallotson, drawn as it seemed from his own course, in spite of himself, by the force of her manner, followed her as far as the threshold, and stood there regarding her dubiously.

"Something to do, my dear?" he said. "Surely not to-night?"

"To-night!" she answered harshly. "Before another hour has gone by. If you are content to go to sleep before you have asserted your authority, once and for all, Robert, I am not content to let you do it!"

In Dr. Vallotson's face, settled into the half-stupid, half-conciliatory pompousness of exceeding sleepiness, there dawned a gleam of what should have been dignified acquiescence, hopelessly clouded by incomprehension.

"Quite so, my dear, quite so!" he began with feeble majesty.

His wife stopped short, and looked at him for a moment.

"Is it possible," she said slowly, "that you've heard nothing? That you've observed nothing? That no one has said anything to you?"

Dr. Vallotson drew himself up testily.

"I have held conversation with nearly every one in the room," he said. "And I think I may say that I am not in the habit of allowing anything to pass me unobserved. I am really at a loss, Adelaide——"

For the second time Dr. Vallotson's words were broken off. With a wave of her hand, before which his pomposity seemed to shrink into nothing, his wife advanced suddenly and rapidly to the door. Dr. Vallotson gave way to her, advancing hastily into the room, and she stood there on the threshold with her back to the room as the front door opened and North Branston came into the house.

He paused for an instant, surprised, apparently, to see her. He was passing her, however, with a rapid, indifferent "Good night, Adelaide!" when Mrs. Vallotson said in a quick, hoarse voice:

"Come in here!"

She moved and went back into the room; North hesitated for a moment, and then with a slight surprise on his face he followed her.

Dr. Vallotson had taken up a position near the fireplace at the farther end of the room. With the introduction of North Branston, something of the vague, sleepy fractiousness of his expression had become focussed. Confronted with a recognised source of annoyance, an indefinite, if distinctly irascible, air of judicial severity had come upon him, and he stood with his hands behind his coat-tails. Mrs. Vallotson stood by the table between the two men; and North Branston, as he paused a few paces from the door, found himself confronted with the husband and wife.

Utterly ignoring North for the moment, it was to her husband that Mrs. Vallotson turned. There was a suggestion behind the iron rigidity of the muscles of her face, terrible in so powerful a woman, as of a fierceness of passion, half wild, and hardly to be controlled.

"I did not expect," she said, and her voice as she addressed her husband rang with contempt, "to have to begin by telling you what has been the common talk of the night; what is being discussed all over Alnchester and half over the county at this moment; what everybody knows except you—you, whose business it is to know it. The head of a family should hardly need to be told when vigorous action is required of him; when his household is becoming a byword among all the scandalmongers of the town. But since you appear to be the one ignorant person in Alnchester to-night, Robert, this is the state of the case."

She paused as though to control herself before proceeding, and the two men acknowledged her words each after his own fashion. Dr. Vallotson seemed to become absolutely inflated with angry self-importance, burning to vindicate itself by action so soon as he should understand on what line action was possible. He cast a wrathful glance at North Branston, as he said:

"Quite so, Adelaide! Quite so!"

North Branston did not speak. He leaned back against the sideboard with his arms folded; his eyes were fixed on Mrs.

Vallotson with a bitter, cynical enquiry in their depths; Dr. Vallotson was not the only ignorant man in Alnchester that night.

"Flirtations with married women," went on Mrs. Vallotson, "are not common in Alnchester, whatever they may be in other places." Her voice was harsh and high, and there was a ring in it which, though she was still addressing her husband, seemed to hurl the words at North Branston on the other side of the room. "Such a thing is a nine days' wonder here. If you choose to allow a member of your household to make himself the centre of a nine days' wonder, I do not! Understand, Robert, that all the city is talking of the shameless flirtation carried on between Lady Karslake and——"

She spoke no name; she only indicated North Branston with an indescribably vindictive gesture of passionate aversion. And even as she made the movement, almost before her last word was uttered, bursting into flame under the sudden influence of her violence as a long smouldering fire, at an unexpected touch, North Branston drew himself erect and brought down his closed hand upon the sideboard with a dull, resounding thud.

"Good Heaven!" he said. "Adelaide, this is too much!"

"You're right! It is too much!" Mrs. Vallotson had turned with a rough, furious movement, and was facing him as he stood, his face white to the lips. "How dare you act as you have done? How dare you make yourself the talk of the place? Oh, you were encouraged, I have no doubt." A shrill laugh, extraordinarily reckless and malignant, broke from her. "Some women, I know, can't live without an affair of the sort! Some women find amusement in courting a man distrusted and disliked by their husbands! Some women——"

"Adelaide, be silent! By Heaven, you had better!"

He had crossed the room with a quick stride, and caught her by the wrist, his face working with the violent passion of a self-controlled man stirred beyond the limits of endurance, and for a moment the two pairs of hot, flashing eyes held one another as in a grip which neither could break. Then Mrs. Vallotson wrenched her wrist out of his grasp, and drew back a step, still facing him.

"Very well," she said harshly. "She's no concern of mine. She's used to affairs of the kind, no doubt. It's you that we're concerned with." She turned suddenly to her husband. "Tell him, Robert," she said, indicating North with a fierce, relentless gesture, "tell him yourself, as head of this house, that while he lives under your roof such things shall not be. Tell him that you will not be made a party to them. Tell him that he has your orders to drop all acquaintance with this woman from this time forth."

What Dr. Vallotson might have said, how far the puny flickering of outraged morality and pompous wrath with which his face was crimson, and to which he had been feebly struggling to give voice, would have been sustained or overwhelmed by the fierce fire which blazed about him, was never to be known. Before he could speak North Branston struck in with an excited sarcastic laugh.

"Orders!" he said. "We'll stop there, Adelaide, if you please. Suppose I tell you that I acknowledge no man's right to give me orders, that I take orders from no man. What then?"

The swelling protestation that burst from Dr. Vallotson's indignant lips was checked in its very birth by an abrupt instinctive gesture from his wife. Urge him to the forefront of the battle as she might, it was evident that she could neither trust him there nor restrain her own fierce impulse.

"You talk mere foolishness," she said hotly. "And you know it. What are you here for but to take orders? What is your position in this house but that of a subordinate? When you are spoken to you will obey."

"You will obey, sir. You will obey!" vociferated Dr. Vallotson, his indignation in its pettiness serving as a strange foil against which the depths of passion in the other two stood out in strong relief.

"I think not," said North. He was looking full into Mrs. Vallotson's face, and he ignored her husband's words as though they had never been uttered. "I think not. Adelaide, I've heard enough—and thought enough, Heaven knows—since I was a little chap of what I owe to you and to your husband. I'll tell you now what I don't owe you—what I've never received from you. I owe you no consideration, no respect, no affection. My position in this house! Good heavens, if it comes to that I know far better than you do what that position is, and what it's doing for me. You've gone a step too far to-night, along a road you've walked for many a day."

He had spoken tersely, vehemently, with

the rush and glow of long pent-up feeling suddenly released. And Mrs. Vallotson took up the word, her face almost distorted by the tumult within her, to which the harsh tones bore witness.

"The step too far is yours," she said. "And you'll retrace it. Acknowledge your disgraceful conduct here and now. Apologise for the false position in which you have placed me and my family. Assure me that no word or act of yours shall give occasion for further scandal, or else this house is no longer your home."

North Branston laughed fiercely.

"You give yourself away, Adelaide," he said recklessly. "Scandal? The word is an insult as contemptible as the minds in which it originated—unless, indeed, it is of your sole creation. Home? It's a thing I've never known. I am hardly to be coerced by empty sounds like that."

"You refuse——"

The furious, ungovernable voice stopped suddenly; stopped on a sharp turn of North Branston's head, a sharp movement of his hand which seemed to come from him mechanically and involuntarily in the very midst of his passion. And in the moment's dead silence that followed, faint and clear through the sleeping house, from North Branston's bedroom upstairs came the sound of a bell. It stopped, and then rang out again, long and persistently.

"The night bell!" said North in the strange strained tone of violent feeling stemmed at its very flood. Without another word he crossed the room and went out into the hall.

Mrs. Vallotson stood where he left her transfixed, almost stupefied as it seemed, by the sudden breaking off of her speech. Dr. Vallotson's attention had half followed North; the remnant that remained was held in check by the strange rigidity of his wife's figure and by her heavy laboured breathing. North Branston had not closed the door, and each low-toned word as it was uttered on the threshold of the house was distinctly audible in the dining-room.

"Who is it?"

"From Hatherleigh, sir! A note from my lady. I've brought the dog-cart, and I was to say for Heaven's sake make haste, sir!"

"It's Dr. Vallotson you want, not me!"

"No, sir, it's you! Dr. Branston. Look at the note, sir."

There was a sharp crackling sound as of the quick tearing of paper, and then North Branston strode back into the room and handed a sheet of notepaper hurriedly to Dr. Vallotson.

"Sir William Karslake sends for me," he said harshly. "For me, particularly, you see. What do you wish me to do?"

For answer Dr. Vallotson took the note and read it aloud in accents of pompous incredulity and indignation.

"DEAR DR. BRANSTON,—Will you come at once? I think my husband is dying. He particularly desires to see you.—Yours,

"EVE KARSLAKE."

The brief sentences, so eloquent in their baldness—even thus read—of the presence of that grim shadow which dwarfs all life to insignificance, struck against the tumult upon which they had broken, seeming to meet and gather together all the waters of strife with one sharp turn into a new channel. In the sudden professional significance thus given to the scene, Mrs. Vallotson seemed to have been swept aside. The contest had abruptly shifted its ground; it lay now a burning question throbbing and vibrating with all the excitement and passion of that which had gone before between the two men. North Branston stood with one clenched hand resting heavily on the table, his eyes resting full on Dr. Vallotson—every line of his figure eloquent of challenge. Dr. Vallotson confronted him, his face full of angry indecision.

"What is to be done?" demanded North Branston briefly.

Dr. Vallotson tapped the letter with impotent irascibility.

"Why, of course—dear me—but—but you must go, I suppose! Really——"

"If I go, let it be distinctly understood that I go under protest! That I go only on a definite summons, and by your express desire!"

The words came from North, flung out, in the strained and quivering condition of his nerves, in vehement repudiation of the position forced on him. He had not glanced again at Mrs. Vallotson. He seemed to be oblivious of her presence. But the voice that answered him was not Dr. Vallotson's.

"Robert, no! What are you thinking of?"

It was a voice so strained, so hoarse, so unnatural as to be barely recognisable, and both men turned instinctively to the figure from which it proceeded. Mrs. Vallotson was clutching heavily at a chair

as she stood, as if for support. Her face was livid, and her great black eyes stared out of it—not at her husband, whom she addressed, but at North Branston. It was in the same unnatural voice, which seemed to force itself from her to her own agony, that she went on.

"He is your patient! He is your patient, I say! How do you know that it is not—a trick?"

A sharp, fierce imprecation had broken from North Branston, and he turned from her, white to the lips with hardly governable fury.

"By Heaven!" he said, between his clenched teeth. "That's worthy of you, Adelaide! It's a fit finish to all you've done and said to-night! I'd go now if all the etiquette of the profession were against it!"

He faced Dr. Vallotson abruptly.

"Do you come with me, or shall I go alone?" he said roughly.

Before Dr. Vallotson's bewildered and vague disclaimer was well uttered, North Branston had turned on his heel and left the room. A moment later the front door had swung to behind him, and the galloping steps of a horse died away in the distance.

There was no glimmer of light in the sky when North Branston reopened Dr. Vallotson's front door. He paused for a moment with his hand on the lock, looking back in the cold darkness of the early January morning, his face looking white and haggard in the waning starlight. He opened the door softly, and went in.

He closed the door behind him, and then he started. He had been absent three hours, and he had expected to find the house dark and still. It was still indeed—still as death itself; but the dining-room was lighted, just as he had left it, and there on the threshold stood Mrs. Vallotson alone.

She stood perfectly motionless, with one hand outstretched and grasping the doorway as if for support. Her rigid features had a grey look about them, at once sharpened and sunken. Her eyes, with a singularly blank stare in them, were fastened on North Branston.

She was so close to him, and her appearance was so utterly unexpected, that for the instant North stopped short, confronting her in silence. And in that instant some strange magnetic influence seemed to pass from her scarcely breathing figure; to creep about him, to steal a hold upon his every sense, and to clutch him in a grip from which there was no escape. Involuntarily, and without consciousness on his part, a ghastly reflection of the strained intensity of her expression seemed to freeze the life out of his features; the horror in her eyes dawned gradually in his, and they stood there face to face, the only waking creatures in the quiet house, held together, as it were, by that which was as indefinite as it was irresistible.

"Well?"

He saw her lips frame the question, but whether he actually heard it or not he could not have told. Still with his eyes on hers and with sombre flashes of that deep-seated fire stirred into terrible evidence by the events of the night, he said:

"Sir William Karslake is dead."

"Were you—in time?"

"No."

As he uttered the monosyllable North Branston seemed to wrench himself from the influence of her eyes. He turned abruptly towards the stairs. But as he reached their foot he stopped sharply and turned. The sound that had arrested his steps was the sound of a heavy fall. Mrs. Vallotson lay across the hall like a dead woman.

SLIEVE LEAGUE.

If Ireland be, as it has been termed, an ugly picture in a beautiful frame, nowhere in all its circuit is the frame more beautiful than about the headland of South Donegal. This great cape stretches some five-and-twenty miles west from the town of Donegal, with arms of the sea running north into it in many places. At Mount Charles, an hour's walk from Donegal, the visitor begins to have an idea of the scenic banquet that is before him. The view from this elevated village is marvellously impressive, without being what is called grand. It may safely be affirmed that with the opening of the Donegal-Killibegs Railway, tourists will be drawn to Mount Charles by seducing posters; and thence onwards the advertising artists will be under no need to exaggerate the pictures Nature so abundantly provides for them. Killibegs is also attained by a fair carriage-road. The gradient of the road is, however, so variable that the eighteen miles exact nearly as much time from the mail-car as the pedestrian will allow himself for the walk.

As a prelude to the magnificence of Slieve League and its neighbour cliffs this walk is tame, though in other respects interesting. The country is not absolutely barren. The familiar black smears of turf cuttings are only too conspicuous. So also are Irish cabins of the old kind, in which half-naked children and the pig consort on terms of equality. It is impossible to disregard the cats in this part of the country. They look as miserable as the pigs and children look hearty and well at ease; and it is pathetic to see them slinking, with ears set back, between the dung-heap and the cabin door, and wearing a distressed look of doubt whether it is better to leap on to the former or pass through the latter: a problem they decently solve by choosing the dung-heap as the cleaner spot of the two. There is no lack, by Inver, of dismantled and roofless cabins in juxtaposition with others strangely patched and botched. One is quite glad to see these signs of an emigration that cannot but be beneficial to the emigrants, however little they may be willing to confess it. To the unprejudiced visitor, however, the rotting cabins, with their garniture of huge docks and nettles, set, apparently, in the very unhealthiest part of the valley, with ugly bogland about them, seamed with pestiferous rivulets of ooze, were at the best but a snug sort of fever-trap for their occupants. The placards of the Derry steamers which bedeck these ruined walls ought to be eloquent of hope to the peasants who have not yet allowed themselves to be evicted.

In this part of Ireland, the Englishman is not greeted with any heartiness. One is prone to think that he is regarded less as a person with available money in his pocket, than as a member of the race which for several centuries has taken pride in persecuting poor Ireland. It is not surprising if this be so. The very school books upon which the Irish Catholic boys are nourished teach them to hate England, even as they teach them that twice two are four. At Dunkineely, a village three miles east of Killibegs, in the house where I lunched, I was curiously diverted by a volume called "The Story of Ireland," "for the youth of Ireland." It was written with much of that commanding eloquence which has been termed one of Ireland's curses, and there was hardly a page of its three or four hundred pages which might not be held to justify, and acclaim as acts of heroism, deeds against England that would in the past have been punished as capital crimes. When such literature as this is backed by the opinion and preaching of the priests, it is easy to excuse the unfortunate peasant for the rancour he feels towards the Saxon stranger. As for the touching of caps and respectful salutations, I have never, out of the United States, travelled in a country where there was less of either. This of itself is of course not a particularly appalling symptom, but combined with a morose and sullen demeanour, it is quite an unexpected characteristic in the poorer Celt. At Bruckless, still nearer Killibegs, finding the church door open, I entered for a moment or two—only to be followed briskly by a couple of tight-mouthed men from the parish priest's orchard, who behaved as if they suspected me of I know not what, and would, had they dared, have liked to prove their strength against me. It is strange how, with the best resolution to be impartial, the Protestant visitor to the West of Ireland finds himself driven to regard the native clergy as antagonistic to him—and antagonistic also to the true interests of the people.

At Killibegs I saw much of the contractor for the railway which has here its terminus, at least for the present. He was a gentleman with more than twenty years' practical experience of the Irish character, and his railway undertakings in different parts of the country had enabled him to form an opinion of the local navvy that must have value. He did not think much of the Irish railway worker. Without constant and close supervision, thanks to the laziness and negligence of his men, he assured me he could not hope to profit by his contract. Yet, relatively, the latter earned good wages. There were nine hundred of them, employed at two shillings and fourpence a day of ten hours. I had seen something of the energy with which they set their spades into the banks between Donegal and Killibegs. At the sound of my footsteps on the adjacent high-road, there was invariably a general pause, of which the men made use to gossip broadly and attend to their pipes, and this vacation seemed to be protracted indefinitely. It was odd while reading the election diatribes against the Conservative Government on the walls in South Donegal to have this railway work ever in view, and to remember that it is Mr. Balfour whom the men have to thank for the scheme and its realisation. It is not commonly believed that the line will be a success. It will be a convenience for tourists

and for the transport of salmon for the British market during the season. Little more can be said in its favour commercially. The peasantry whom it links together cannot be regarded as at all likely to spend money in using it.

Undoubtedly Killibegs is a pretty place —if the weather be fair. Its bay is better than most on this west coast of Ireland, so prolific in harbours that seem purposeless. Only a southerly wind can make anchorage in it at all risky, and it has a protected waterway about two miles long by an average of half a mile broad. On either side of it the hills rise in broken masses, heather-clad; while, west and north, mountains form a background to the hills. A tolerable fishing river, the Bungosteen, enters the head of the Bay by leaps and bounds over picturesque rocks. But for the poachers it would give a more than tolerable amount of sport. In Donegal, however, poaching seems quite an accredited pastime. The landlords are only too happy if they may get their rents. Such abstract properties as fishing rights are at the mercy of the country-side. A culprit may be caught red-handed, and yet hope to be acquitted by the twelve honest men who are his jurors.

There seems no particular reason, however, why the Government should rejoice Killibegs with a grant for harbour works as well as the railway. It would be different if there were any manufactures or minerals in the district. But there are none, save the homespun of the cottages and a certain quantity of hosiery, which already suffers cruelly from the competition of the same kind of goods "made in Germany." The Killibegs citizens—shrewd fellows, they will lose nothing for the want of asking—think that England might just as well make their bay into a national harbour, where ironclads may come to stay for a time, and buy their eggs and milk and butter, as well as vegetables and butcher's meat. "At any rate," they say, "if we may not have a harbour, we must have a pier." The pier was never a very obvious need, but the railway has been designed to emphasize this need by building a large embankment for the station just where the popular landing-place used to be. "Now, at least," cry the citizens, "we must have a pier as indemnity for the damage your railway has done us." I suppose the pier will follow anon, in consequence, if only the people clamour loud enough. The population of Killibegs is well under a thousand, with accommodation for forty or fifty visitors. Ordinary commercial principles seem little connected with certain of the public works in Ireland.

The population of the neighbourhood is, however, quite dense enough for the good of the people. From the high-road between Killibegs and Carrick, one sees a long line of hovels built on the mountain-side, each with an attenuated strip of oats and potatoes sloping towards the thoroughfare. It is quite worth while to examine these homesteads. They have an enchanting outlook over Fintragh Bay and its pretty sands, but they themselves are not at all enchanting. A miry cow-track is the approach to them all alike, and in very wet weather the rain from the steep bluffs above them cannot but soak into them. It is significant that, like the Sarde houses built when Algerian raids were a frequent experience, they have their backs to the above-mentioned cow-track. Loud-tongued and impolite dogs are also part of the community. Upon the whole, an eviction here might be made a hard business.

Were it not for the soft and black nature of their low-lying parts, some of the rough lateral valleys behind Killibegs would be charming little nests. They are rather upland basins than valleys, surrounded by white rocky masses veined with turf and crimson with heather, and with knots of cottages in their midst. Two or three leafy trees of considerable age overshadow the cottages, the thatch of which is in good order; and the multitude of geese and poultry in their vicinity argue their tenants fairly well-to-do. The brilliant green of the grain patches, which have been reft from the wet bogland, on a fine day dazzles like a sunlit emerald. There are also cattle and asses in the pasture of the glen. The women and children look happy and well-fed, and even while you are bethinking yourself that there is no destitution here, the stalwart forms of half-a-dozen men swing over the rim of their pent little domain, their work-bags telling of the employment with which the railway has provided them. Yet here as elsewhere the people have shrieked to the visiting Land Commissioners about the enormity of their rents, and their utter inability to pay them and live at the same time. And the Land Commissioners have heard their prayer, and abated their dues with so little hesitation that they now feel exceedingly vexed that they did not make a much more sensational fuss, and swear that paying rent at all is out of the question.

But it is when we are close under the

huge buttress of Slieve League that we see a really fine example of the overcrowding which curses certain districts in Donegal. This is at Teelin Bay, where the Glen River enters the sea. The soil is no better, if no worse, here than elsewhere. The cottages are of the dismal, no-chimneyed kind, of but a single room, in which the bare-legged women and children and the various brute bipeds and quadrupeds all consort on a floor of the native earth. They are stuck anywhere, and it is obviously nothing to the one household that the drainage of the household above pollutes its premises, so long as its own drainage confers the like distinction on the homestead that seems built as a catch-pit beneath it. Looking from the watershed between Kilcar and Teelin upon the numerous houses by the Bay, one is first of all struck by the beauty of the scene. The silvery reach of water, with its fringe of green and yellow patches and white-faced cottages, and the bold cliffs of Carrigan to the south, make up a delightful picture from the new road—another piece of Governmental relief. There are sure to be boats in the Bay, and during the fishing season there may be quite a fleet of them, for the lord of the manor nets a few thousands a year by the salmon in spite of the poachers. The assuming coast-guard buildings at one end of the Bay, and the shooting-box of Mr. Musgrave, the landowner of the district, at the other end, somehow make one indisposed to think there can be much poverty here—especially in the face of all this natural beauty.

Yet, in truth, there is enough and to spare. The eye is at a distance pleased by these pale yellow cots, from the charred wicker chimney vents of which the blue peat smoke soars so comfortably. But they sadly need thinning. The Congested Districts Commissioners have done good work here. Unfortunately, they cannot strike to the root of the evil. A generation hence or less, matters will probably be still worse than they were before the Government interfered with benevolent intent. As it is, the poverty is undeniable. Rents have been substantially lowered. Even as I walked up the valley on its eastern side, I came upon the Commissioners' car, and the Commissioners themselves could be seen in a cottage holding their inquisition. A knot of elated women were hard by, eager to lavish blessings upon the gentlemen in acknowledgement beforehand of the boons they looked to receive at their hands. The daily bill of fare in these degraded cottages consists of stirabout and sour milk for breakfast, the same with potatoes for dinner, and stirabout again for supper. Fish and meat are luxuries with which fortune may indulge them once in a way. Tea, however, is generally to be found even in the most poverty-stricken dwellings. I was informed by a gentleman interested in tea that the Irish peasant as a rule pays four shillings a pound for the herb, when he buys it at all. It may be so. Certainly I have tasted no better tea anywhere than I have drunk in extremely humble quarters in Donegal. But if the rule prevails here of offering the pot one spoonful of the merchandise for every member of the household who shares it, I fancy either that my informant—who was an Orangeman—exaggerated, or that the consumer gets it, like his homestead, on an agreement of unlimited "tick."

It is from Teelin Bay that the ascent of Slieve League is best made. I shall not soon forget the day that introduced me to the mountain. It was mid July, with such weather as they do not often enjoy in moist Donegal: hot and cloudless. The perfume of drying hay was in the warm air, and the Glen River ran past Carrick with such a diminished stream that a salmon fisher, who had come to the little town to try it, lost all heart, and went elsewhere in less than twenty-four hours. He ought not really to have been so impulsive, for there were fish to be killed in the rocky pools, shallow though these appeared. It was, however, weather better suited for Slieve League than for the river. It was also the best of weather for the potatoes, and for the turf-cutters who were out above the houses of Teelin Bay, dotting the hillsides thickly.

Strangers are not common objects in the extreme southern part of the village whence I was to climb towards Carrigan Head. The number of children on their way to school, who stopped in a crowd to stare at me, was surprising. The cottage dogs also resented my presence, though I thrust myself upon them in no obtrusive manner. But gradually I left the habitations below me, and hoped I had done with Irish destitution for a spell.

I was about to leave the track for a heathery slope, when I heard a dismal, weird sort of shout which was repeated several times. The echo doubled the number of these repetitions. At the moment I did not pretend to ascertain what the noise meant. It came from the neighbourhood of one

of the forlorn cabins set on the hem of the peat slope. The tale of it was told me afterwards. Here dwells an old man who is out of his mind. Years back he was to have married a Teelin girl, of whom he was exceedingly fond. The girl, however, went off to America with some one else, leaving him disconsolate. His grief later made a lunatic of him, and a lunatic he continues. Daily, and also in the night, he spends his waking hours in shouting the name of the girl who deceived him. The poor fellow is allowed to do this unrestrainedly, though anywhere but in Ireland, perhaps, his mania would be voted a public nuisance.

With this eccentric discord still ringing in my ears, I attained the summit of the Carrigan Hill. The Atlantic, blue and bright, was beneath, seven hundred and forty-five feet down, and in the distance the sands of Bundoran far to the south could be seen, and the extreme western headlands of Mayo were grey, ghostly shapes. Down in Teelin the air was a trifle close, and not improved by the odours of heated seaweed and drainage. Here, however, it was a tonic for the gods. It was a joy to tread the dry spring grass, close clipt by sheep; and it was also a joy of the thrilling kind to get to the edge of the Carrigan Head precipice, and gaze down the crimson and lead-coloured glades of rock against the base of which the ocean was throbbing with singular placidity. The voice of the gulls, wheeling about the lower reaches of the headland, came to me faintly. I lay on the smooth sward and tasted this sublime prospect with the palate of fancy. Here was "beautiful Ireland" with a vengeance. A single steamer was in sight, leaving a dusky trail in the pool of quicksilver it troubled in traversing. It was a deal nearer to the shore than it would have dared to come had the weather been in the least degree fitful, and they must have had a magnificent feast for their eyes during the half-hour they stayed well within view of Slieve League.

A picturesque old watch-house in dilapidation stands on the extremity of Carrigan Head. Sheep were this day huddled about its base and fallen stones, seeking shelter from the sun and the flies. There are several of these ruined towers on the Donegal coast, from Carrigan to Horn Head, but none set more impressively. They recall the troubled times of 1798, when the French were daily expected to aid the Irish insurrectionaries. I do not think Napoleon would have had better luck in Donegal than he had in Kerry and the south generally. Don Juan d'Aquila, of Elizabethan fame, after some experience of Ireland as an invader invited to invade, left the country in a deplorable state of irritation against it. To him we owe the somewhat venomous jest, "that when the devil upon the mount did show Christ all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, he did not doubt but the devil left out Ireland and kept it for himself." His French successors cannot have been much better pleased with the land after their vicissitudes in it. According to the author of "Chez Paddy," in County Kerry there is still a sentimental or rather a traditional hankering after his countrymen. He was thus greeted by an old woman with whose domestic wretchedness he made brief acquaintance. "Ah! your honour, I have heard of the French! May the blessed Virgin Mary be with them! Will they not come soon? When they are here we shall be less miserable, God bless them!" One must not, in Ireland, take such remarks very seriously. Still, such chatter is an interesting commentary upon these abandoned towers, superseded by the telegraph.

But if Carrigan Head is satisfying to the lover of the romantic and the tremendous in Nature, Slieve League, which comes full in view by crossing a little turfy plateau to the north, may well strike the beholder momentarily dumb with awe. Seen as I saw it, with a blue sky above its heights, it was magnificent and dreadful at the same time. But with lowering clouds brooding over it, or enwrapping its topmost crags in black vapour, with the waves of a south-westerly gale thundering against its shattered roots and into its caves, it must be much more terrible than beautiful. I am content to have seen it in its milder presentation.

The mountain is nearly two thousand feet high, with an immediate rise from the sea. In one place, where the base forms a tiny white strand, it ascends sheer for several hundred feet; an impassable slope then carries the height on; and another perpendicular wall of white rock three or four hundred feet vertical brings it to its climax. In all, the mountain offers to the Atlantic an amazing face two miles or more in extent. From its summit it falls to the water chaotically, with lovely masses of fern in its hollows, and huge isolated pinnacles or chimneys of rock studding it. At a little distance it is quite conjecturable that these

chimneys combine to form the semblance of a castle. The Spaniards three centuries and a half ago may well have been beguiled by them to their ruin, as they were in the north in their quest for Dunluce Castle.

I made the ascent of the mountain by its cliff-edges. These in part can be compared to nothing but a number of sugar-loaves, each notched into the shoulder of the other. There was thus more than enough steepness in the task, and a measure of excitement, too. In one place there is a positive amount of danger. I had been advised by a considerate lady of Carrick ere starting, on no account to tackle the "One Man's Pass" up Slieve League. But after a certain course of disillusionments elsewhere in the world, one is prone to think that report universally exaggerates when it has to do with mountain perils. I therefore took all the sugar-loaf climbs and descents as they came, and believed I had given the One Man's Pass the go-by without noticing it. But it was not so. I came at length to a roof-edge of rock, white and polished, rising at an angle of about thirty-eight degrees, some two feet only in width, with an immediate drop on the seaward side and a very steep slope below the rock wall to the east. This is the One Man's Pass. It is about fifty feet in length, and even on such a day as blessed me, requires some nerve to help one over it. The foothold on the bare rock is, of course, likely to be indifferent. A nail in either boot may be fatal. I am far from feeling disposed to magnify the terrors or difficulties of this Pass, but I should not care to traverse it in a gust of wind, after a hearty meal with unlimited wine, or in the downward direction at any time. The Teelin people, I am told, when they come hither, surmount it on their knees. It is undoubtedly the safer, if the less dignified, way. The artists for the Donegal-Killibegs Railway must make much of the One Man's Pass. This alone, well advertised, might bring fortune to the company. In a few years' time I shall expect to hear of an iron railing welded into the rock for the protection of tourists. Such desecration, however, is not yet.

Though precipitous towards the Atlantic, on the landward side the summit of Slieve League forms a small and rough plateau of white weathered slabs of a quartzose rock singularly like Carrara marble. The space is sacred to the memory of one Hugh McBride, a robber, who in the sixth century, or thereabouts, came and built a hermitage here in which he spent the final years of his life doing penance for his earlier misdeeds. It is hard to say how much truth there is in the story. The Church believes it, however, and that is enough for the Irish of Teelin Bay. Annually the priest of the parish and a number of his parishioners ascend the mountain—not by the One Man's Pass—and humble themselves in prayer.

McBride's Chapel is still supposed to be indicated by certain contiguous walls. There is also a Holy Well, the cold water in which is grateful to the tourist. The various heaps of stones which decorate the mountain-top in the neighbourhood of the chapel and the well are the stations at which the devotees pause to pray. Each stone may be said to be emblematic of a human sin or series of sins. The piles are not therefore to be viewed with chilly indifference, even though they are no particular ornament where they stand.

For my part, I preferred to be on the seaward side of the prodigious cliff, and to gaze and gaze at its precipices until they had written themselves fast on my memory. There is nothing to equal them in Great Britain. They may be classed with the Caldera of Palma, and the precipice of Myling Head in the Faroe Isles, as indescribable. It will interest some people to know that Slieve League is notorious for its white heather. On a day like this it is also memorable for its midges. I should think they were about half as much a plague to me as they are in Lapland in midsummer. They are, moreover, an audacious and persevering species of gnat, to whom tobacco smoke is rather an agreeable novelty than a nauseous barricade between them and their prey.

The descent from Slieve League to the west is as pleasant and prompt as the ascent on the eastern side is laborious. The slope is severe. One plunges downwards with strides like those of the giant in his famous boots. It is all heather, far as the eye can see. Lough Agh, about a thousand feet below the mountain-top, and reputed full of trout, is soon lost. Lough Auya, a few hundred feet lower, and also a capital fishing resort, is hidden by the burly thighs of Mount Leahan. The sea itself is lost. Crimson heath and nothing else is in sight, with vivid green oases where ice-cold springs burst forth to form in conjunction the Owenee River. By immediately skirting the cliffs, however, after an hour or two

Malin Beg is reached, off which the island and lighthouse of Rathlin O'Birne stand prominent. A strong tide runs between the mainland and this island, which at low water is only just an island.

Malin Beg must be mentioned if only for its attractive little bay, hemmed in on three sides by cliffs, and for the fact that Prince Charlie the Pretender stayed here while looking for the French ships which were to help him to the throne, but which failed to come. A time may come when Malin Beg Bay will be a popular resort like Torquay and Babbicombe. It has an exclusively south aspect, excellent sands, and as much of the sublime and beautiful in its vicinity as the ordinary human being can appreciate without a feeling that he is overwhelmed. At present, however, it is more than thirty miles from a railway. From the side of Leahan, one looks upon the methodical green and brown and yellow squares of its village and the broad sooty smears of the turf patches, and marvels more than a little at the courage which has led so many mortals to settle here. Fifty or sixty hovels may be counted. Yet every Atlantic storm from the west, south, or north, must bring the salt spray destructively upon their meagre crops. The Donegal peasant of the coast is fully alive to the drawbacks of his home. He admits without an effort that he is lamentably handicapped by the poverty of the land and its exposed situation. If you like to encourage him, he will even descant for a long time on the congenial theme. Yet if you do but hint that he had better emigrate like so many others of his countrymen, he will turn an eye of suspicion upon you. Though his cup of hardship seems to you almost full to the brim, he doubts a future of which he knows nothing, more than he fears a succession of bad seasons on his ancestral patch. His mistrust of Providence is a monstrous thing. It is a thousand pities and a crying shame also that his parish priest does not take pains to teach him that he, like the rest of us, has an inheritance which, with due equipment, he may legitimately and with confidence demand of Dame Fortune. But where the guides are too often blind, the people they guide cannot be expected to move in the right direction.

NORTH-GERMAN SUPERSTITIONS.

If you happen to be North-German born, or if it falls to your lot to sojourn for a while in North Germany, you will find a whole farrago of superstitions ready to your hand.

For instance: you must not spin during the twelve nights of Christmas, lest you should walk after your death, nor after sunset on Saturday, for then mice will eat your work. Speaking of eating, if you want to have money and luck all the year round you must not fail to eat herrings on New Year's Day; nor, if you wish to be lucky, must you rock an empty cradle, or spill salt wantonly, or cross knives, or point at the stars. If you leave a dirty cloth on the table overnight you will make the angels weep; if you point upwards to the rainbow you will make the angels' feet bleed; and, if you talk of cabbages while looking at the moon, you will hurt the feelings of the man in it, who was a cabbage-stealer in his salad days. Three candles burning in one room betoken the presence of a bride.

If you meet a were-wolf and call him thrice by his Christian name, he will resume his proper form. If a bat perches on your head, you will soon go bald. It is very lucky to see a spider about noon, or in the early morning, and unlucky to do so in the evening; but it is even more unlucky to kill a spider. Who dreams of cats will have money left to him; who is a friend to cats will be lucky and happy all his life long. If you should dream of dogs or horses you will shortly receive hasty news.

During an eclipse all hidden treasures are open, and if you are wise enough to carry a primrose with you, you will be able to help yourself to any of them. No witchcraft will ever harm you if you carry a water-lily bud about your person; and, if you should chance to dream of lilies, you will soon be happily married. If you eat double cherries you will have twin children; and if you are afraid of lightning, take heed to keep in your house a plant of orpine or livelong. Sow peas on Wednesday and Saturday, if you do not want them to be eaten by birds; put blue marjoram in the baby's cradle when empty, to keep witches at a respectful distance; and if you don't want your last baking to go mouldy, you must take good heed not to bring cornflowers into the house. Stars are souls; and when one falls a baby is born. When a baby dies, God makes a new star.

THE BROKEN TRYST.

Where on the mighty Grampians the shadows flit and fly,
As cloud and sunshine sweep across the changeful northern sky;

Where the clear brown burns go brattling adown the darkling glen,
And the heather clothes in purple sheen the crest of Clochnaben;
Where the dim blue turf-smoke eddies against the dark pine wood,
Knee-deep in fern and bracken the shepherd's sheiling stood.

And eve by eve young Angus from its ingle stole away;
While the gloaming closed about him, and the mountain paths grew grey;
And at his whistle, gliding by each foxglove's dappled bell,
Came bonnie Elsie, she men called "the flower of Fernie Dell";
And where the rowan berries gleamed like fireflies through the mist,
The lovers by the Belty's side met for their evening tryst.

"I must needs away, my darling, for bread is ill to earn,
There isna gold for gathering in bracken bloom and fern:
I must away to seek it, across the great North Sea,
And bring enow to build the nest that thou shalt bless for me;
For thou'lt keep troth and wait for me, and time is none so long,
When willing hands are busy, and loyal hearts are strong."

"Give me a spray of rowan—see the branch that we will share;
And, Elsie, when the evening star shines on the Hill of Fare,
Go thou to watch it rising, and give a prayer and tear
For him who'll work and serve for thee, through every parted year.
And when the prize is won, dear, our trysting-place shall be
Here, where the bonnie Belty swirls below the rowan tree."

On many a summer gloaming, when all was calm and still,
And the whirring of the blackcock's wing was heard upon the hill;
On many a winter evening, when the snow lay white and deep
On lonely glen, and frozen burn, and jagged mountain steep,
Sweet Elsie with her soft cheek pale, her blue eyes red and dim,
Stood on the lofty Hill of Fare, and said a prayer for him.

She gathered hope from April flowers, she drew bright auguries
From song of bird or burst of bloom, or change in summer skies;
And ever closer to her heart she pressed the rowan spray,
And hid it 'neath her pillow, while she dreamed her watch away;
While many an eager wooer to her father's cottage came.
To lowland laird or highland chief her "nay" was still the same.

The berries fell and flashed again; on Kerloch's towering side,
Season by season glowed and paled the heather's purple pride;
No message came across the sea, no word to cheer her on.
Was all that hope a lying gleam? were all those vows foregone?
Was gallant Angus false—or dead? She knows now, who at rest
Lies with a faded rowan spray upon her maiden breast.

A COWBOY ON 'CHANGE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"PRISONER gives his name as Jones," said the officer chuckling. "He's ironed hand and foot for fear of accidents; but mind, if he goes for you, yell, and I'll let you out."

So the policeman threw open the grated door.

"Prisoner—here's yer lawyer; and I warn you, if you smash him up you won't get another."

The door swung to behind me, but so dark was the cell that at first I could see nothing of "Mr. Jones."

"Good afternoon—ahem!" said I feebly. One never knows what may happen in the Bitter Root City jail.

"I ain't going to hurt you," growled the prisoner. "Sit down; make yourself at home."

The voice was manly, resonant; the man was a young athlete; I could just see that his boots were the dainty high-heeled wellingtons of a cowboy; while the rest of his dress—a sombrero, shirt, overalls, a broad web belt, and silk handkerchief round the neck—bore out the character. The man's presence already brought up some faint memory; indeed, I felt that I knew him, but not under the surname of Jones. Surely this sunburnt young frontiersman was some old friend!

"I can't offer you any refreshments, Mr. Lawyer," said the boy drowsily. "The accommodations, in fact, are slim—very slim. Why," he woke up, "what the deuce are you staring at?"

"Jack Brancepeth," I ventured, "don't you know me?"

"What? Williams major? Hurrah! Shake, you duffer!"

It was not easy to shake hands, for my old schoolfellow was shackled spread-eagle fashion to the bed.

"Yes," he laughed, "they've got me roped for branding, and then they'll clip my ears, and corrall me all by myself, lest I corrupt the good manners of the other victims."

"Well," said I frankly, "it jolly well serves you right. A fool who amuses himself shooting the stockbrokers on 'Change ought to be——"

"Smacked," said Jack. "I knocked out three deputy marshals, damaged one sheriff, bored a few holes through things generally. I wish I could chew up some more police by way of dessert. I feel as happy as a chip."

"Look here, we're civilised people in Bitter Root City, we're not used to cow-punchers."

"Well, you don't amount to shucks, as you say. Look here, I want you to let down the bars of this corrall—I've been lonesome."

"How can I get you out? Don't you see, these stockbrokers are not used to being shot at?"

"Yes," he groaned, "that's what's the matter. I've offended their little local prejudices. But that's all right!"

"All right for state prison," I explained.

He only chuckled.

"Well, I did ruffle 'em up, some. But, as I say, that's all right. I'll tell you the straight yarn—then you can turn it into the right kind of lies and have them sworn to. See?"

"Go on," said I.

"Well, to begin with, I got me a tract of meadow land up Wild Creek, back of Branchville, Idaho — do you know the place? No? Well, I stocked the ranche out of what I'd saved, with a short-horn bull by Climax, together with thirty-nine head of scrub cattle, and a band of ponies. Since then, whenever I've happened upon mavericks—unbranded cattle, you know—I've adopted the poor orphans, clapped on my little Q—that's my brand—and turned 'em into the pasture. There's been some satisfaction in annexing old Silas Hewson's calves, but even then it ain't over and above square dealing, besides which it's slow work building up wealth out of strays. So I suppose a hundred head all told would make up the sum of what I had last fall, though since then I've been laying by my thirty dollars a month cowpunching for the 'Square Triangle' outfit down Boise way, which money I've put into improvements on my Wild Creek ranche."

"You seem to have been on the make?"

"Yes," Jack heaved a great sigh, "but it came deuced tough. Why, I've sworn off poker, quit getting drunk, even tried to worry along without cussing."

"But why all this virtue?"

"Why, don't you see, you loon—you pilgrim? I'm in love!"

"Oh."

"It was all for Kitty's sake."

"Who's Kitty?"

"She's my girl. Say, do you know old man Hewson—down to Idaho Flats?"

"What, the capitalist who floated the Grubstake mine?"

"The same. A right smart silver proposition is the Grubstake. Why, I guess the old man must be worth his cool five millions now. Anyway, he's got six head of young fillies, that there ain't the like of west of the Bitter Root Mountains, calkers, and away up at that."

"Blooded?"

"I should smile. Out of the very best Virginian. There's Kitty, Saph, Matred, Nehushta, Zebudah, and Mehitabel, all raised on the ranche, all tended the same school at Wild Creek."

"School!" I howled, "do you mean the man's daughters?"

"Well, rather! You see a man needs lots of wealth to pretend to any of these girls, for Silas is like them Old Testament chiefs who'd see lords and dukes sniffing around the lodge, and let the dogs at 'em because they ain't kings. She's too good anyway for a common scrub cowboy like me. Oh, man, but you should see her sit a bucking horse! She's like the west wind riding a cloud, with the bright hair flying around her head, and her eyes like stars. The broncho tears up the ground, but she laughs as she drives home the spur, and there's no fear in her. I've fought two men for fooling around her already—one with rifles on horseback, he's in hospital; the other shooting at sight with guns, but I hunted him out of the country."

Jack Brancepeth always was handsome, but now, as he laughed in triumph, I felt that Miss Kitty had no need to rue her choice, for this gallant, simple, boyish lover had the face of a Galahad.

"Yes, that's why I've been trying to keep straight. Why, I'd be a mangy hermit if I could make myself good enough for her. But, as she said, the old man would never let me have her unless I'd lots of wealth. I tried hard enough, but then we'd been engaged more or less for two whole years without my making my pile."

"But," said I, "this doesn't seem to have much bearing on the present trouble?"

"It hasn't, eh? Well, you reach your hand into the left pocket of my belt, and you'll find her letters. There, that's right; now read the one on top."

So I found myself glancing over the first of a batch of letters in a fine round schoolgirl hand like a string full of knots.

"DEAR JACK," wrote Kitty Hewson, "if you want me, don't be a fool. Here's Pa favouring Daddy Longlegs, who wants me awful bad. He's given Daddy Longlegs a straight tip how to make his fortune.

Pa told him that they've just found a tremendous lot of silver in the Grubstake mine; but the principal owners are lying low, and saying bad things about the mine until they can rope in all the stock, whatever that means. Anyway, they've broken down the pumps on purpose to let the works get flooded, so as to hide what they've found. Daddy Longlegs has sense enough to speculate in Grubstakes, you haven't.—KITTY."

"Yes," continued Jack, "Kitty's pretty straight goods, and when she means a thing she says it. If Daddy Longlegs had a thousand dollars, I was worth two thousand; at least that's what I realised in hard cash by selling my ranche to a tenderfoot. So I rode down here to Bitter Root City, went to Kitty's uncle, Hi Hewson, the stock-broker, planked down my roll of bills, and said: 'Buy Grubstakes.'

"'You hadn't ought to buy outright,' says Hewson; 'you should cover.'

"'What's that?' said I.

"'It means,' said he, 'that you plank down your money, I run the show; if the stock goes up, I sell out when you think that you're pretty well fixed for life; if the stock goes down two thousand dollars' worth, you lose all you've got.'

"'I'll gamble,' said I, 'with all I can hold down by sitting straddle.'

"Well, you should have seen the brokers guying Hi Hewson in the Mining Exchange, and afterwards I heard them talking among themselves in the Coffee Palace.

"'What,' says one Smart Aleck, 'you think Hi Hewson's working for Silas, eh? You must think Silas P. Hewson's gone loco! The old man confessed only last week to a friend of mine that the mine's played out. Why, the works are chuck ablock with water, and no tunnelling facilities to drain it; the pumps have broken down, and of real pay ore there isn't a dollar in sight.'

"'A level head has old man Silas,' says another; 'as to Hi Hewson, he's roped in a sucker who thinks he can gamble—some fool of a cowboy, he says.'

"'There was another sucker last week,' says Smart Aleck, 'Daddy Longlegs they call him—planked down a thousand dollars on a falling market, he! he! Well, he's busted now, cover all run out.'

"At that they all drank a toast, 'Long live the suckers;' but—well—I laughed.

"Now read the second letter," said Jack.

"You're a daisy," I read. "Daddy Longlegs has come back dead broke, and his language is just disgraceful. Hold on, keep a tight hold, Jack, for Pa says he'll soon be letting the cat out of the bag, so if the stock goes down any more you must keep a good heart and hold on.—KITTY."

"That's all right," said Jack, "but by the time I got the letter on Monday morning my cover was running out too. Says Hi, 'It's all your own fault; you never took the trouble to ask my advice, or you wouldn't have bought till to-day;' but that was poor consolation, for I was like to be as big a fool as Daddy Longlegs. When the Exchange closed on Monday, the Grubstake was quoted at forty-three, and if it went a point lower my two thousand dollars were lost. Read the third letter."

"Hold on to the stock," I read. "You needn't have been jealous of Daddy. He ain't in it, never was, for I love you, old boy. On Wednesday morning the news will be in all the papers that the Grubstake was flooded on purpose to keep the secret of a great bonanza; your stock will be worth a fortune. Hold on for my sake, darling. Hold on for all you're worth.

"KITTY."

"At that I plucked up courage," said Jack cheerfully, "sold my horse, saddle, rifle, 'shaps,' lariat, spurs, coat, watch, everything; and planked down the cash with Hi Hewson. I could hold on now, he told me, till the stock dropped to forty and a half; but if it went below that I was lost.

"On Tuesday I went to the Mining Exchange Building with my heart in my mouth. The stock opened at forty-three, then a little was sold at forty-two, and at noon it stood at forty-one and a half. Scared, almost crazy, I grabbed hold of a reporter, stood the drinks, and loaded him up with news. I told him to say in his paper that the Hewson outfit was bearing down the market, that Silas had flooded the mine to hide his bonanza until the moment came to shout. But the reporter made out that the next edition came out at four o'clock, and the Exchange closed at half-past three.

"'Get out the posters early,' I told him, 'bribe the printers, work the ropes somehow, and if I win my game, I won't forget you.'

"The reporter winked, and started to write out his news; but when the market

opened again in the afternoon there seemed to be no hope left, for the stock was at forty-one and a quarter, with only three-quarters of a point between me and perdition.

"From where I stood in the public gallery I saw the brokers whispering, for a rumour had got wind from the printers that made them crazy. Some of them were offering forty-three, forty-four, even up to fifty for Grubstake stock; but there wasn't a dollar for sale. 'Twas old Hewson's broker that started the counter rumour making out that the newspaper yarn was some fool's canard—or else a tale gotten up so that the holders could sell out in a hurry. I was paralysed when the bidding stopped short; I didn't know one more move that could save the game; I was ready to kill myself.

"Hi Hewson sent up a clerk to say he hated to see me ruined—I'd better sell. It was decent of him, but I told the clerk to go to blazes, and further, before I'd throw up my hand like a white-livered coward.

"At three o'clock came a telegram from Kitty that said, 'Be brave. Pa has bought all the stock he wants, and wired his broker to quit "bearing."'

"Oh, man, but she was worth fighting for. She's an angel out of heaven, and I'd rather have died than broken faith with her.

"The clock was going so slow that it seemed to have stopped. Five past three, ten past, quarter-past three: the stock at forty-one! Twenty past three, twenty-three past! I was saying my prayers with my revolver ready in my hand for death if I lost the game. There was a commotion down below in the hall—a rumour was spreading through the crowd, till it rippled up into the gallery, and I heard the news—the Grubstake Syndicate bankrupt!

"I knew it could only be a lie gotten up by old Hewson's broker. I knew that in another moment the newspaper posters would be fastened up at the door. I knew that if the market held still another three minutes I'd saved my game.

"The fool at the blackboard was marking the closing prices on Tigers, Poorman, Cœur d'Alene, Eagle of Murderer's Bar, Grubstake. He'd wiped out the old figures to write down Grubstake at the price of a bankrupt mine; the brokers were yelling like demons; the place shook with the uproar; the clock ticked at twenty-nine past; the fool was writing the figures that meant ruin—despair—death!

"Raising my gun I fired right at his fingers, missed, fired again, but the fool was gone. I fired again and again, then once again, and flung my revolver at the blackboard across an empty hall. Yes, I'd stampeded the brokers, I'd stampeded the whole confounded bunch—the ruck of them was screeching with panic against the doors—and I stood alone in the gallery. The game was won!

"What matter if I did get excited? What matter if I did knock a few deputy marshals out of the gallery? What matter if I did damage a city official—or a dozen—or scores?

"The news is out; I've won me a wife and a fortune; I'm boss of the Range; and Kitty shall live like a queen because I love her—because I've loved her like a man—and she's mine!"

AN ADVENTURE OFF CAPE HORN.

THE fog hung so thick over the sea tha one could cut it with a knife. Never before had I seen anything like it. There was a sway in it, too, for I felt it strike my cheek like icicles, and then fall off again till it was almost warm.

It came suddenly. The wind had steadied down since morning, till now it was paralysed, or at most beat faintly on the bank through which the ship was slowly pushing her way. Above, the sails loomed out like huge shadows; they seemed but darker patches of the impalpable vapour which clothed all things. I could hear them flap loudly as the ship swayed her tall hamper now this way, now that, reeling and tumbling about on the great crestless seas which rolled up from the westward. And the thundering of the rudder under the round stern, as it felt the weight of the seas, shook the ship to her centre, and combined with the music of the canvas to form a concert too utterly abominable for a seaman to express.

Every minute the bell for'a'd rang out its brazen warning. It was a necessary precaution, for any moment a vessel might have crashed into us through the darkness.

"I can't understand the look of things," said Captain Hawkins, as he came up the companion. "The glass is steady, and yet I don't like it, Mr. Norris; I don't like the weather at all."

"Nor I; it's unnatural," I said, "and trying to one's nerves, too."

"I remember," said the skipper, steadying

himself against the mizzen-mast, "when I was second of the 'Barnaby Rudge' we were caught in a hurricane, and it commenced just like this; but then the glass spoke plain, and we had everything off her."

"Well, the ship's in good trim," I replied; "it would be a change."

"I'd like to take the extras off her," he continued, without heeding my remark, and he cast his eyes aloft in a critical fashion. "But——" he never finished the sentence

"Man overboard," came in a screech from the foc'sle head.

There is no cry so instantly responded to as this, nor one which at sea falls so coldly on a seaman's heart.

My first thought was to back the main-yard. So I gave the order quick and sharp as if my lungs were made of steel. It was good to see how the men took the order. They sprang to braces and pulled as if their lives were on it. The next instant I had run to the lee taffrail, for instinct had told me he had fallen to that side. I found the captain throwing the coiled bight of the cross-jack clue-line far out into the mist where a black object was visible. It fell short. The captain gave a groan, and pulled in like mad for another fling.

I saw it was useless; and with a cut let go one of the after lifebuoys, and sang out to the man to make for it.

"Away the port quarter-boat!" roared the skipper, running aweather, with a face white as a table-napkin, for he was a feeling man, and took such an accident to heart.

"Ay, ay!" I responded. And in I hopped with some of the old hands. "Stand by!—let go!" and down dropped the boat as the ship lurched heavily to windward. A few powerful strokes took us free of the ship and the anxious faces hanging over the side.

Away we sped over the great green hills, trembling a moment on their tops and then gliding down, down into the dark smother between them, till again we reached the summit and had more light; for the mist hung low on the sea, and was so chill that it struck to the bones.

I had taken my bearings with considerable care before leaving the ship, for although we had been quick in throwing the ship aback, we had drawn far past the man in doing so. After pulling thus for some time, it seemed to me that we must be near the spot. Accordingly, I ordered the men to lay on their oars. Just then a hail came to us faint-like out of the mist on the starboard bow. It made the flesh creep. I felt a little shiver run down my back.

"'Twas the cry of a molly," I said, for I could see the men were scared. And it did sound uncommonly like it when the bird is frightened.

"Na, na," said an old Scotchman, "'twas nathing o' the kind; 'twas jest like the kelpie Jenny Macalister an' me heerd down i' the crook o' the Feugh, January come twalve year."

"Ay," said another fellow, "it be uncommon speerit like. I'm thinkin', sir, wi' all respect, that Cockney Jo, poor chap, has gone down all standing by now, and it 'ud be better to bout ship, for I'm a kind o' particular like about meetin' such gen'lemen o' fortune."

"And ay," piped in another, "they do say as 'ow there be an awfu' sight o' dead seamen in these here seas."

That was enough. Search farther they would not. The fear of the seas was in their hearts, and I might as well have spoken to the oars; indeed, the oars in their hands had more heart than they.

But now, a new and more terrible danger threatened us. We had lost our bearings. The ship was nowhere to be seen; nothing but the fog "thick as the curtain over hell," as one of the sailors remarked in his horror at realising our situation. To add to our dangers, darkness was coming on. A yellow tint in the westward showed that the sun was sinking. It was only a lighter obscurity in what was all obscurity.

We had been two hours away from the ship. So much I could just make out by placing the face of my watch so as to catch the shine of the sun. And all this time the great green seas rushed out of the mist upon us, bore us up, and then rolled away into the darkness astern. I now saw that there was no hope of gaining the ship before the night closed in. The fog, I knew, was settling deeper, and it struck me too that the cold was becoming more intense. The captain's foreboding also fell upon me, with a chill colder even than that murky atmosphere.

The men now sat quite still. They had shipped their oars, and had given themselves up to that stolid apathy which is only despair in another guise. I heard the teeth chattering in their heads, and I knew that if we had to fight for dear life, as very likely we should have if wind sprang up, they would be useless in their present state.

"Come, men," I said, as cheerily as my mouth could pipe the syllables, for to say the

truth I felt more like singing at a funeral than piping to a dance, "belay that down haul and put a stopper on those rat-traps. We're not dead yet; the fog can't last much longer, and the skipper won't leave us, be sure of that."

This seemed to cheer them a bit.

"Ay," said the old Scotchman, "and there's a moon the night, thank the Lord for that. There's naethin' like a bit moon to lift the cap o' a fog, and kelpies are aye feared at the bright round thing. They say they canna bide the twa een o' it."

"Ay, lads," I bore up, "but Murdoch's right," for I had forgotten the moon; "the sea 'll be bright as a looking-glass by eight bells. And as for supper, we must just tighten our belts a bit."

"A canny mon's aye to the fore," said Murdoch, "and I jist looked after my weam afore I jumped into the boatie."

And he produced five large ship's biscuits.

"Why," I said, as I slapped my pocket, "that's capital; we'll not do badly, for that reminds me there's a good dram for each of us."

I had picked up a bottle of whisky from the saloon table before leaving the ship, in case there might be need of it.

The men brightened up visibly at this. One of them even ventured a joke at the speerit, but Murdoch stoppered it with a round turn.

"Nay, nay, lad, dinna ye laugh at a speerit, they're gay uncanny craturs, and it's aye venturesome speaking o' them, for they're awfu' shairp at the hearin'."

Two great shadows at the same moment shot through the last yellow streak of the sun, and the men seemed to take it for granted these were the speerits that were "awfu' shairp at the hearin'," for they stopped talking, and would hardly be prevailed upon to even whisper.

There was now absolute darkness. I don't think I was ever in anything like it. At sea the night is much lighter than on land, but now I couldn't even distinguish the palm of my hand placed close to my face. It was impossible to steer; the sea around was like a black cauldron. I could only tell by the boat's motion that we were now ascending, now descending the great rollers.

I now cast out a sea-anchor, constructed of two oars lashed together, and patiently waited for the moon rising. I wasn't at all sure, however, if the moon would break up the fog. I might not tell the men so. I only prayed it might. I must have slept, for I remember nothing more till I felt myself rudely shaken, and a voice—it was that of old Murdoch—shouting something in my ear.

"Get ye up, Maister Norris! Guidness sakes, sir, but ye're awfu' stiff at the wakenin'."

"What's up, Murdoch?" I said, starting up, but suddenly recollected, and cautiously reseated myself. "Has the moon risen?"

"Nay, nay, sir, it's our earily i' the nicht for that, I'm thinkin'. It's jist this. There's nay sae muckle tum'le, and I winna argy that we're nay in the lee o' somit."

"You're right!" I cried excitedly, "you're right; the boat's quite steady. And —Murdoch, it's colder!"

Then like a flash the whole phenomena of the weather struck me; its strangeness was all explained. We were in the lee of an iceberg. I had now better hopes of the moon breaking up the banks of vapour, and I ordered the men to get in the sea-anchor, and stand ready to make way, which they did with alacrity.

We hadn't long to wait. Presently a pencil of pure silver flame shot over our heads like an electric ray from a war vessel's search-light. Then a white misty glimmer away over our stern showed flat with the plane of the sea. It gradually grew larger and whiter, till, all of a sudden, like the drawing of a stage-curtain, a great rent was made in the fog, splitting it from top to bottom, and there, bright like a huge pearl, the moon looked in upon us.

The men gave three wild cheers, and Murdoch with quaint gravity said "there was naethin' sae pleasant as jist a bit blinkie o' the moon; it was that refreshing like."

What caught my attention most was a monster berg floating in the very centre of the opening. Its tall minaret-like pinnacles glistened like purest silver under the light of the moon, and stairs and terraces and cupolas everywhere glimmered and sparkled, as though all the mosques of Islam had been joined to form one splendid temple. It was quite close to us too. Its loom almost fell across us. It awed us floating there so silently, so majestically, with the last swathes of breaking mist curling off its bright sides.

"Surely there's something upon it," said I; "men, do you see, close by the edge of yonder cape?"

"Oh, ay," said Murdoch, "it will be a seal, I'm thinkin'."

A few powerful strokes brought us alongside the berg, and sure enough there sat a

seal blinking at us with his big eyes as if mightily surprised at such visitors. He lay close by the edge of an inlet which ran right between two immense portals, for all the world like those of an Egyptian temple. They shone gleaming blue in the face of the moon.

The opening was large enough to admit of two boats rowing abreast, and the water was as calm as a mill-pond. But the seal bestirred himself as we approached, gave a flap with his tail, opened his mouth, shut it again with a clap, and then flopped into the water so near that the spray he raised came into the boat.

I was grieved; Murdoch had manufactured a spear by tying his sheath-knife to the end of a spare oar. If the worst came to the worst, and we had to abide upon the ice, seal's blubber would have kept us alive for some time.

The men lay on their oars. It was dark ahead, and it was impossible to tell how the way terminated. Just then, however, a streak of light ran right through the darkness, and I caught a glint of the round face of the moon.

Casting my eye up to a great spire of ice, leaning like the tower of Pisa, over the sea to the right of us, I saw that the berg was moving in a circle. The ray of light which stood out of the darkness, then, must be cast through the centre of the berg. And so it was, for when we cautiously entered beneath the doorway we found ourselves in an immense cavern It was domed, of fine white ice, thin and translucent like glass. The moonbeams came through a great slit, running from the water rim right up to the roof, and formed a second entrance, but smaller than the one we had entered by. A buttress had fallen away, for part of it lay upon a broad terrace that shot out half-way across the floor of the avern.

Everywhere there were huge icicles; one I especially noted was as large as the mainmast of a full-rigged ship, and stood up from the middle of the terrace. The moon set straight on it, and it cast a shadow like a sun-dial upon the white water.

But what took us from these things was a cry which Murdoch gave out:

"Guid sakes! but the Lord hae mercy upon us, what an awfu' sicht!" and he pointed with his finger to a part of the wall close by the main door, and almost flat with the water.

It was a little in the shade, but when my dead-lights did set true, my heart gave a thump that nearly strained my rib timbers, and then stopped suddenly like. There was a man's face showing clear through the wall as though it were set in a window. I never wish to see that face again; it was the most drawn, ghastly face I ever looked on, and the unwinking stare of its eyes set my very hair on end, and made the cold sweat break out over my body, although but a moment before my limbs were numb with the terrible cold.

The men were more terrified than myself. The ghostly cry in the fog, and our exhausted condition, all conduced to strengthen their natural superstitions. After that exclamation of Murdoch's they made no sound. They were past that. They only looked and looked as though they would fix that deadly face upon their minds for ever. And then silently still they dipped their oars in the water, and we glided out of that floating sepulchre.

We were far out on the moonlighted sea before a word was uttered. Then Murdoch, who was always mouthpiece to the rest, said solemnly, laying on his oar:

"Weel, if that waurna a kelpie we saw anoo', I kenna the look o' ane. It's a dead won'er we werena at the bottom o' that deil's cauldron; forbye there's nay fire an' brimstane, there's ether things jist as waur. It's a deil's trick, and he's mony o' them."

Shortly after, to our inexpressible joy, we saw our good ship lying with topsails backed not half a mile away. We were soon on board, and never shall I forget the feeling of gratitude which rose up within me when my foot once more touched her deck.

It was easy for me to reason out the tragic fate of him who looked white agony at us out of the dusk of that horrible cavern; how, shipwrecked, he had found shelter there, but died of want and cold; how by falling away of the great buttress the balance of the berg had deepened to his side, and so only his face showed over the black water, encased in its covering of glass-like ice, which had fallen as water from the roof and frozen on his features. Although all this seemed very possible, and even old Murdoch said "vera true," but with that intonation which I knew meant just the opposite, the others would never have it else than "it was just a speerit," and even now I am unable to divest myself of that horror of the unseen which fell upon me in that drifting berg off the far Cape Horn.

A DOUBLE TRAP.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"'Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?'"

Juliet, in a large straw hat and a white frock, was leaning over a gap in a somewhat dilapidated stone wall. Romeo, in a light tweed shooting-suit, was standing on the grass by the wayside looking up at her. The time was high noon on a bright, sunny day early in autumn.

"Wherefore, indeed!" replied the young man promptly. "I'm sure I don't want to be Romeo a moment longer than I can help."

"Well, to be sure, you are very polite, sir!"

"Ah, you know what I mean! I don't want to be Romeo because—because I wish to play Benedick, 'Benedick the married man.'"

"Patience, Arthur; patience."

"And haven't I been patient? Why, let me see, we've been engaged three months now!"

"Three months—twelve weeks," retorted Juliet lightly; "and Jacob served fourteen years for Rachel."

"Yes, yes," cried Arthur pettishly; "but Jacob was a patriarch, and had any amount of years to play with. Life's too short for that kind of thing nowadays."

"Still, we must wait. You know that I'll never marry without papa's consent."

"I do," he answered gloomily; "and I also know that I can't marry without the governor's. It's a lively prospect."

"Well, we must hope for the best," replied the girl cheerfully. "Papa may come round at any time."

"That's just it. He may come round at any time and catch me here, and then we may look out for alarums and excursions, followed by banishment, of course."

"And we have no Father Lawrence to assist us," sighed Juliet.

"No; we must depend upon our mother-wit. We must resort to stratagem, Lily, dear. For some days I have been wrestling with a gigantic idea, and I think I've licked it into shape at last. What do you say to a plan which promises to reconcile both our stern parents to the idea of our union?"

"It must be a wonderful plan," cried Lily, opening her blue eyes very wide.

"And, still better, to reconcile them in time to each other?"

"It must be a very wonderful plan," said Lily again; but this time she shook her head doubtfully.

"Well, I think it is rather good," replied Arthur, with the honest pride of an inventor. "But listen, and then let me have your opinion of it."

And without further preface he began to disclose its beauties.

Lilian Grantley and Arthur Curtis were—or, at least, thought themselves—the most unhappy pair of lovers since the time of "Juliet and her Romeo." Their fathers, two of the chief landowners in the small Midland county of Fenshire, were at daggers drawn. Yet they had once been fast friends, and were still near neighbours. Their estates "marched" together, and they had long entertained the idea of uniting their properties by a marriage between their children. Unluckily, when Lilian was sixteen and Arthur some two years older, a grave political crisis arose, and their fathers, who took opposite views of the situation, allowed themselves to be drawn into all the storm and turmoil of a contested election. In the heat of conflict words were spoken that could not easily be forgotten afterwards, and the result may easily be guessed. When the election ended, their old friendship was a thing of the past, and, as there was no feminine influence to soften asperities—for they had both been widowers for many years—they drifted more apart every day. Neither made any advances towards reconciliation, and in secret each was watching for a favourable opportunity to catch his former friend upon the hip.

They had not long to wait. Owing to the proximity of their estates, disputable points were always cropping up, which, while they were friends, had been easily settled or allowed to rest in abeyance, but which, now they were at variance, were quite as easily fomented into serious causes of quarrel. First there was some unpleasantness about the trespassing of keepers, then there was a dispute concerning certain fishing rights, and finally they became hopelessly embroiled over a right of way, which led them straight into the law courts. There they fought and bled. Grantley was the victor, and Curtis vowed vengeance. Thenceforward, on every public or parochial question that arose, they took opposite sides and became the heads of two hostile factions, and all their neighbours and tenants for full five miles round about were divided into Grantleyites and Curtisites.

Long ere this, of course, all idea of a marriage between their children had been abandoned, and the young people had been peremptorily bidden to think no more of each other. As a natural result, they began

to think seriously of each other for the first time, and when, some four years after the commencement of the feud, they met in town, where Lilian was staying with an aunt for the season, they were already more than half disposed to fall in love with each other. At their first meeting they caught the infection, within a week they were sickening for the disease, and before the season was half finished the patients were entirely "given over"—to each other.

Their engagement was necessarily kept a close secret, however, for the feud between their fathers was at its height, and the enemies were just then engaged in a hot dispute over a patch of debateable land between their estates to which both laid claim. In itself this ground was utterly worthless, growing nothing but thistles of exceptionally fine quality; but had they been donkeys—as, indeed, they were—they could not have contested its possession more stubbornly, litigation setting in with great severity, and the combatants announcing their determination to fight the matter to the bitter end. In truth, they had worked themselves up into an almost rabid condition of hostility; and each was so fully convinced that he had been infamously wronged by the other, that he would have hesitated at nothing, and would have cheerfully adopted the most unscrupulous measures to be revenged upon his rival.

Such was the state of affairs in Fenshire when Miss Grantley came home towards the middle of July, Arthur following her a few days later. With their return their real difficulties began. In town they had been able to meet frequently and freely; but in Fenshire they met seldom and by stealth, in a quiet by-road skirting a secluded corner of Mr. Grantley's park—an arrangement more satisfactory to Lilian, who liked what she called the "romance," than to Arthur, who dreaded the risk. That his meetings with Lilian could not long be kept secret, Arthur felt sure; and so he had set his wits to work, and, after much inward wrestling, had evolved the wonderful plan whereby he hoped to win his Lilian, and to bring peace to the distracted houses of Grantley and Curtis. On the merits of that plan, however, it is not necessary to pass an opinion here. Suffice it to say, that, although Lilian did not display all the enthusiasm he had looked for, before the lovers separated they had agreed to make trial of it, Arthur promising to lead the way as soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself.

It was Mr. Curtis who, all unconsciously, furnished the required opening a few evenings later, when he and his son were sitting over their wine, for he broke the period of silence which ensued after the servants had withdrawn, by clearing his throat in a magisterial way that he always affected when he had anything of importance to impart.

"Do you know, Arthur," he began solemnly, "I think it's high time you married and settled down."

During the past year he had made the same remark, on an average, about once a week, but hitherto Arthur had always laughed it off evasively. On the present occasion, however, he replied boldly:

"Well, lately I've been thinking so myself, sir. But I must ask you to allow me perfect freedom of choice in the matter."

"Certainly, certainly," Mr. Curtis answered heartily, glad to see that his son was at last disposed to yield to his wishes. "I only make one stipulation: the girl must be a lady—if with money of her own, so much the better, but, if without it—well, you'll have enough for two. But have you any one particular in view?"

"Well, yes, I have," replied Arthur slowly.

"Glad to hear it," said his father, holding his glass up to the light, and eyeing its contents with critical approval. "Is it any one I know?"

"You used to know her very well, sir. If I marry any one it must be Miss Grantley."

"What!" roared Mr. Curtis, smashing his wine-glass in his agitation. "That fellow's daughter!"

"Exactly, sir. Why not? You used to be very fond of her, and I'm sure she at least has done nothing to forfeit your regard."

"I have always had a very high opinion of her," Mr. Curtis admitted reluctantly. "She takes after her mother. To be perfectly candid, I must confess that, but for one thing, there is no girl in all the county I'd be so ready to welcome as a daughter—with or without a portion. She'd make a good wife, I feel sure, and her birth is almost as good as your own."

"In fact, sir," said Arthur triumphantly, "you only object to her because she is her father's daughter."

"And is not that enough?" Mr. Curtis burst out passionately. "The daughter of the man who has thwarted, outraged, and insulted me in every way! Who shut up our right of way to the quarry? Grantley! Who opposed me on the burning public

question of the sewage farm? Grantley again! Who had the presumption to stand against me for the County Council? Once more, Grantley! And who, at this very moment, is trying to rob me of one of the most cherished portions of my estate—Tinker's Patch, which has been in our family for the last three hundred years? Why, Grantley—always Grantley! I assure you, Arthur, I would almost give my right hand to be revenged upon this man."

"Less than that will do, sir," said Arthur coolly, quite unmoved by this outburst of indignant eloquence. "If you want to be revenged, you have only to give my right hand—to his daughter."

"What do you mean?" snapped Mr. Curtis fiercely. "This is no joking matter."

"I am not joking," returned Arthur quietly. "Supposing, sir—remember, I only say 'supposing'—I were to marry Lilian without your consent, what would you do?"

"Do?" bellowed his father, turning purple with wrath. "Turn you out of doors, cut you off with a shilling, and never see you again. That's what I'd do. I told you so years ago, and I meant it."

"Mr. Grantley said very much the same thing to Lilian, and he meant it," replied Arthur calmly. "Believe me, then, you'd irritate him far more by permitting our marriage than by forbidding it."

"Explain yourself," said Mr. Curtis shortly, knitting his brows. "I've outgrown my taste for conundrums."

"It is very simple, sir. By forbidding our marriage, you act just as he would wish you to act, and play his game for him. But if you consent, what will happen? Why, Mr. Grantley, mortally offended, will play the Roman father, though he will be punishing himself far more than anybody else. Fond as he is of his daughter—who would not be?—he will voluntarily undergo all the pain of parting from her rather than pass over her disobedience to his commands. The chief part of the penalty will fall upon himself, but for all that he will inflict it."

"You think he would?" enquired Mr. Curtis thoughtfully.

"Has he not said so fifty times, and does he not pride himself on being a man of his word?"

"He's as obstinate as a mule," growled Mr. Curtis, "if that's what you mean."

"You put it forcibly, but evidently you understand me. Very well then, sir. He has deprived you of much of your local authority, he is trying to deprive you of your land, but, if you allow me to deprive him of his daughter, you'll be more than quits with him. And while you make the man you hate thoroughly miserable, you will be making two people you like unutterably happy!"

"You go too fast," exclaimed his father. "You speak as if you'd only my consent to win, and yet you haven't seen the girl for more than four years!"

"I saw her less than four hours ago," replied Arthur, and then he plunged into an account of their meeting in town and all that it had led to, while his father, scarcely heeding him, sat musing in silence over the new idea that had been presented to him. The more he thought about it, the better he liked it. Never before had he had such a chance of dealing a deadly blow at his enemy—for that it would be a deadly blow he did not doubt. By putting himself in Grantley's place, he could picture exactly what he would do if his child disobeyed him, and also how much pain it would cost him to play the Roman fool with his domestic happiness. He was convinced that, although his daughter was the light of his home, Grantley would cast her off if she married Arthur—and live unhappily ever afterwards. The temptation was too great for Mr. Curtis, and he yielded to it.

"I have come to the conclusion, Arthur," he said benevolently, "that it would not be right to fetter your choice. I will not run the risk of spoiling all your future life, simply because I happen to have a quarrel with the father of the girl you love. If you must marry Lilian, you must, and there's an end of it. But you'll never gain her father's consent, and of course you will understand that I cannot be mixed up in a clandestine marriage."

"You need not be, sir," cried Arthur eagerly. "Miss Grantley goes to town next month, and I must go there too at the end of the vacation." He had lately been called to the bar, but was still briefless. "With both of us in town, a secret marriage should be easy to arrange, for Lily is of age."

"Well, well, settle it as you like, but I wish to know nothing about it till it's over. When you're married, however, let me know, and I'll increase your allowance to enable you to set up house-keeping comfortably. There, there! No thanks. We'll talk more about this later, but now you must leave me, for I want my after-dinner nap." And he settled down in his chair, mur-

ing to himself with a peaceful smile: "This will upset that fellow Grantley terribly, or I'm a Dutchman."

It was about a week after this important interview that a stormy scene was being enacted in Mr. Grantley's drawing-room. Arthur's forebodings had been amply justified. A gossip had observed the lovers in the lane, and had at once decided that it was her "duty" to open "that poor dear Mr. Grantley's" eyes, and to tell him how shamefully his daughter was deceiving him. As a result, Lilian was now sobbing on the sofa and her father was stamping up and down the room, ranting like a transpontine Lear.

"It's useless to deny it," raved Mr. Grantley. "Mrs. Havers tells me she saw you talking to that young Curtis in the lane. She could not be mistaken. She passed quite close to you, and her eyes are almost as sharp as her tongue is. Shame may prompt you to deny it, but I repeat that it is useless."

"I do—don't deny it," sobbed Lily from behind her handkerchief, "and I'm not ashamed of it. We—we're engaged."

"Engaged!" gibbered her father. "And you're not ashamed of it?"

"No!" retorted Lily with spirit. "Why should I be? I remember you used to think very highly of him yourself."

"I still do," he confessed, somewhat taken aback; "certainly he does not resemble his father in the least. He seems to be a promising young fellow. I believe his disposition to be a good one, and we must not allow prejudice to blind us to the fact that, next to ourselves, the Curtises are the oldest family in Fenshire. No, I have no objection to the young man in himself; but circumstances render any connection between us impossible."

"You refer, I suppose, to your—your misunderstanding with Mr. Curtis?" Lily suggested timidly.

"Misunderstanding do you call it?" snorted her father indignantly. "I understand him only too well. The man is determined to be the plague of my life, a perpetual thorn in my side. Has he not opposed me in everything—even in my labours for the public good? Did he not defeat me when I stood for the Council? And has he not actually had the audacity to lay claim to one of the most picturesque spots on my estate, Tinker's Patch, which has belonged to our family ever since there were Grantleys in Fenshire? And you say you are engaged to this man's son! I wonder you cannot see for yourself that it is totally out of the question."

"I know it is," said Lily sadly. "I know we must part—both for his sake and his father's."

"His father's!" sneered Grantley. "If that were the only objection, I'd say let the marriage take place to-morrow. Pray what have his father's feelings got to do with it?"

"He is so vindictive," sighed Lily, "and, oh! so obstinate. If his son disobeyed him, he would disown and disinherit him completely, and yet it would almost break his own heart to do it. You know how proud he is of his son, how entirely all his hopes and ambitions are bound up in him, and how barren life would be to him deprived of his son's society, but, if Arthur married against his wishes, he would turn him out of doors and never look upon his face again. He said so only the other day, and he would keep his word, although it would rend his heart, and though, by his own act, he would be devoting himself to a lonely, empty, and aimless existence!" she concluded, with just such a sigh of relief as a child gives when it has gabbled off its lesson correctly.

"By Jove! I never thought of that!" cried her father, obviously impressed. "You say he distinctly warned Arthur that he'd disown him if he disobeyed him?"

Lily nodded.

"Well, if he said so, the stubborn old ass will assuredly keep his word. He always does, when he has vowed to do something disagreeable. And so, if I permit this marriage, I do not lose a daughter but he loses a son. I must think this over," and he began to pace the room slowly, while Lilian watched him anxiously. Her words had indeed given him food for thought. Supposing he were to connive at Arthur's marriage with his daughter, would he not be avenging himself more completely on his enemy than he could ever hope to do by any other means? For years he had been aiming blows at Curtis without much apparent effect; but now Lily's words had pointed out a weapon with which he might deal a mortal wound. Then there was something that tickled his sense of humour in the idea of making Curtis his own executioner; and, if he lived to be a hundred, he was never likely to get such another chance of paying off all old scores in one sweeping reckoning. Besides, why should he make his daughter miserable when, by promoting her happiness, he would also be satisfying

his own craving for revenge? In short, his thoughts were almost the same as Curtis's had been, and they led him to precisely the same conclusion.

"Lilian," he said at last, with majestic gravity, halting by her sofa, "I do not want to be harsh or unjust in any way; but answer this question honestly. Are you sure that you are not deceived in your own feelings; that this is no passing passion; that, in a word, you really and truly love this young man?"

"Yes," whispered Lily.

"And you believe that he is equally sincere, and equally devoted to you, eh?"

"He says so," replied Lily, almost inaudibly.

"Then never," cried Mr. Grantley, in a burst of noble emotion, "never shall it be said that I impeded the course of true love. Your happiness, my dear, must always be my chief consideration, and to promote it I resign my own wishes and prejudices without a sigh. Besides, I like the lad; I always did. He is unfortunate in his father, but he cannot help that. Let us be just, by all means, let us be just. As for Mr Curtis, if he chooses to behave like a fool, let him. If he does not consider your feelings, why should you consider his? Confound his impudence! how dare he attempt to destroy my daughter's happiness? He deserves to be taught a lesson. I give my consent to this marriage. Arthur has a few hundreds a year of his own from his mother, I know, as well as his profession; and for the rest, your settlement will be more than sufficient to enable you to live in all comfort. And some day, when I am gone, you will be mistress here. Of course," he continued blandly, "I cannot openly encourage a son in disobedience to his parent, however unworthy of respect that parent may be; but you are going to your aunt's next month, and if you choose to have a quiet wedding, you have my approval, though I cannot be present. However, I'll make a point of seeing Arthur during the week, and if our interview is satisfactory, you may make your own arrangements, about which I wish to know nothing. May your future be bright and unclouded, and may it never give me cause to regret that in this matter I listened to the promptings of my own warm heart, rather than to the cold and calculating counsels of prudence!" And Mr. Grantley struck an attitude of paternal benignity, chuckling to himself the while: "This will be a knock-down blow for Curtis, or I'll eat my hat."

In October the lovers were quietly married, and after a brief honeymoon they settled down in a pretty suburban villa, where they lived very comfortably on the handsome allowance that Mr. Curtis gave Arthur, and the substantial settlement Mr. Grantley had made on Lilian. Here they were occasionally visited by their fathers; but as their visits were never made concurrently, the enemies never met, and consequently never suspected the trick that had been played upon them.

Ere long, however, the great Fenshire feud began to languish. In the first place, it was discovered that Tinker's Patch, the chief bone of contention, was really public ground, and, as a matter of fact, had never belonged to either of the disputants; and in the second place, satisfied that they had at last secured their revenge, Grantley and Curtis were no longer disposed to carry on the war with their former vigour. Moreover, now that Arthur and Lily were married, the old dream of "a ring fence" revived simultaneously in both their bosoms, and each looked longingly at the other's property, and decided that it would be a great pity to let it go out of the family; but as each fancied that he had wronged the other mortally, and feared that his advances might be repelled, neither cared to take the first step towards reconciliation. Still, their old rancour was dead, and they ceased to attack each other, standing strictly on the defensive; and so, although peace was not yet proclaimed, an amnesty had virtually been concluded.

It had lasted nearly a year when, one autumn morning Mr. Curtis received a telegram announcing that Lily had presented Arthur with a son and heir. Eager to inspect the curiosity, he caught the London express, and a few hours later was seated in the drawing-room of the suburban villa, waiting for Arthur, who had gone upstairs to ascertain if the baby was "on view." Suddenly the door was flung open, and a servant ushered in Mr. Grantley, who had also received a telegram and had followed Curtis to town by the next train. It would be difficult to exaggerate their surprise. For a full minute they stood glaring blankly at each other; but by degrees an idea dawned upon them, and astonishment gave place to pleasure.

"I see it all," thought Grantley. "His iron will has been subdued by the news of his grandson's birth, and, unable to hold out longer, he has hurried here to crown the happiness of the youthful couple with his forgiveness. It is a graceful act!"

"I understand," said Curtis to himself. "He has long been relenting, and makes the joyful news his excuse for yielding. He has come to be reconciled to his daughter over the cradle of her first-born. This is really touching!"

They cast a friendly glance on each other, and made a hesitating movement with their hands.

"And now that he has tacitly confessed his fault," mused Grantley, "shall I reproach him? Now that he has made the only reparation in his power, shall I say a word to mar the harmony of this reunion? Never!"

"No doubt his conscience has already sufficiently punished him for his folly," Curtis continued to himself. "And shall I, by a single word of reproof, introduce the element of discord on this auspicious occasion? Perish the thought!"

With one accord they moved to meet each other, and their hands, at first timidly extended, met in a long and cordial clasp.

"Grantley," said Curtis, with impulsive frankness, "I've been a fool."

"Curtis," said Grantley, resolving not to be outdone in generosity, "so have I."

"Well, they say there's no fool like an old one," resumed Curtis, forcing a laugh. "Let that be my excuse for many an action which I dare not attempt to justify."

"Neither of us can crow over the other, I fear," answered Grantley, with a guilty blush. "I, too, have done many things which I now most sincerely regret."

"I always was such a hasty fellow," Curtis continued, with a heavy sigh.

"You know my hot temper of old," Grantley murmured apologetically.

"Why, why, did we ever quarrel?" groaned Curtis. "I assure you the last five years have been the unhappiest of my life."

"And of mine," said Grantley, in a voice broken with emotion. "But 'doth not a meeting like this make amends?'"

"Then all is forgiven?" exclaimed Curtis joyfully.

"And forgotten!" cried Grantley, with the greatest enthusiasm.

"This is as it should be, my old friend," observed Curtis, after a pause, wiping his spectacles. "Doubtless we have both been to blame, but let us avoid recriminations. Let us be content to renew our old friendship, and strive to forget that it has ever been interrupted."

"With all my heart," answered Grantley, using his handkerchief vigorously. "From this moment the last few years shall be blotted out as if they had never existed. Let us agree to bury the dead past in silence, and never again refer by so much as a word to our unhappy dissensions."

"It is a bargain," cried Curtis, "and there's my hand upon it!"

Once more they exchanged a hearty pressure, and the demon of discord fled for ever. And while they still stood hand-in-hand, the door opened, and Arthur entered with the nurse, bearing the olive-branch.

Now Ready,

THE

EXTRA AUTUMN NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONTENTS:

A DIPLOMATIC ADVENTURER.

Within the Castle Ward—On Board the "Inconstant"—A Secret Mission—The Fancy Dress Ball—Stopped on the Highway—The Adventurer at Home—An Invitation to Normandy—At the Old Chateau—Hunting the Wild Boar—In a Secret Prison—A True Lover's Knot.

AUTUMN LEAVES—Worth a Guinea; An Unseen Presence; "To-morrow will be Friday;" An Autumn Manœuvre; Wanted, a Skipper.

Also a Table of Events in 1894, Obituary, and Calendar for 1895.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Of all Booksellers and at the Railway Bookstalls.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. Evans & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 306.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE outlook from the window of Archdeacon French's study, on a certain February afternoon, was very far from cheerful. The trees in the Close gardens shivered disconsolately under low, grey skies, and swayed to and fro before an occasional gust of wind, which seemed to change the fine mist with which the air was heavy into a sudden blur of rain. Archdeacon French himself was paying no attention to the prospect from his windows, but judging from his expression as he paced slowly and thoughtfully up and down the room, the influence of the weather might have been heavy upon him. His face was very grave, and there was a slight trace of anxiety about it; his eyes were clouded as if with preoccupation, and they were a little sad. He had stopped mechanically in his walk, and was gazing absently out over the grey gardens, when the door opened, and a servant announced "Dr. Branston." Archdeacon French turned quickly.

"Ah, Branston," he said, "that's right! How are you?"

The tone in which the words were uttered made them the cordial welcome of an expected visitor. And North Branston answered as they shook hands:

"Many thanks for your note. I should have called though, anyhow."

"Taken your chance of finding me, and possibly have gone away without giving me a chance to say good-bye, eh? I should have been sorry for that, Branston."

There was a moment's pause, and then North Branston, with a sudden glow in his deep-set eyes, answered quickly:

"So should I, sir. Thank you."

Silence followed—one of those silences eloquent, not of constraint, but of a mutual sense of something which would render irrelevant trivialities of every day. It was broken by Archdeacon French.

"You go to-morrow, I believe?" he said.

North Branston made a gesture of assent.

"Yes," he said. "By the three-twenty."

"The appointment is a good one?"

"Fairly. Yes; good on the whole."

"And it leads to better things?"

"It has been known to do so; yes."

Archdeacon French's words had come from him rather slowly—hardly perceptible intervals ensuing on North Branston's replies—his eyes all the time intently observant of the younger man's face.

"Good!" he said heartily, on the last words. He paused a moment, and then went on, with a reserved kindliness of tone which was as full of tact as of sympathy. "I won't say how much we shall miss you here; you know that, I hope. But I will say how well pleased I am that you should be able to move out into a wider field. I may say now without impertinence what I have observed for some time; that Alnchester is a somewhat narrow sphere."

Neither the tone nor the slight smile with which the words were uttered brought any answering expression to North Branston's face. He was looking before him almost absently.

"Perhaps," he answered indifferently. "I don't know."

"You are looking forward to the change?"

Again Archdeacon French smiled.

A shrug of the shoulders was at first North Branston's only answer. Then he said listlessly:

"I'm not much of an enthusiast, you know, sir. I don't expect much, one way or the other."

There was a moment's silence, and then the Archdeacon, changing the subject, began to talk about London and connexions of his own there, offering the younger man, in the course of his talk, sundry introductions, which were accepted frankly, if without any great warmth. And shortly afterwards North Branston rose.

"I have some patients to see," he said; "and a good many odds and ends to attend to."

His host rose also.

"Of course," he said pleasantly. "I'm only glad you made time to come and see me at all. You have a good many farewell visits on hand, I expect."

They were standing face to face now, and North looked back into the kind, shrewd eyes with an odd gleam in his own.

"Do you think so, sir?" he said. "In Alnchester?"

There was an odd directness about the words which seemed to cross the indefinable barriers by which the previous conversation had been vaguely hedged about.

Archdeacon French held out his hand with a sudden movement; he gripped the fingers that met his strongly.

"My boy," he said firmly and directly, "you are making a mistake. You can't live on those terms with your fellow men, and live all round. Here or in London you must be in touch with your world, or half your being is paralysed. Good-bye, and all good wishes."

"Thank you, sir," returned North. There was a slight smile about his mouth, but he shook hands heartily. "There's one good-bye I'm sorry to say, at any rate, and I say that now. Good-bye."

A moment or two later he had passed out into the grey dampness of the February afternoon.

Three weeks had passed since the Infirmary ball; three weeks during which Alnchester had never been at a loss for a topic of conversation. The death of Sir William Karslake, following so suddenly upon the interest of the ball, had come as a climax so unforeseen, and on such other lines than had been looked for, that the first thrill which ran through Alnchester on receipt of the news was almost too awe-struck to be pleasurable. Alnchester recovered itself, however, almost immediately. Before the news was twelve hours old it had become possible to connect the new excitement with its somewhat paled predecessor, to the considerable heightening of both; it had become possible to conjecture with solemn loquacity as to how far the dead man's seizure had been accelerated, or even induced, by the emotions excited in him by his wife's conduct, and to construct hypotheses, at about the rate of one per speaker, as to his widow's present state of mind with regard to her past behaviour. On Lady Karslake, indeed, her doings being still open to conjecture, the attention of Alnchester was particularly concentrated. The arrangements for the funeral, which took place in Alnchester cemetery, were discussed extensively in town and precincts—the detail in connection therewith which was most freely canvassed being the widow's personal presence at the grave—and her subsequent plans were breathlessly awaited. The interval of expectancy was not long. Three days after the funeral it was known in Alnchester that Hatherleigh Grange was to be sold; that Lady Karslake was leaving England for Vienna, where her nearest connexions were established in the diplomatic service; and the next news was that she was actually gone. But the departure of Lady Karslake, though it closed one chapter of Alnchester gossip, save and except from the point of view of reminiscence, did not leave the city wholly destitute from a conversational point of view.

Side by side with the events at Hatherleigh, there had occurred events in the Vallotson household which would alone have created considerable talk. The news of Sir William Karslake's death ran through the city side by side with the news of Mrs. Vallotson's illness; somewhat serious illness it was understood to be at first, involving total collapse and prostration. Opinions were somewhat divided as to whether the oncoming of this illness had been responsible for that callousness as to North Branston's reprehensible doings at the ball, which some people ascribed to her; or whether the callousness in question was a mere figment, and extreme annoyance responsible for the illness. The latter theory reached the top of the poll by leaps and bounds, when, as Mrs. Vallotson begun to move slowly towards convalescence, it became known in Alnchester that North

Branston had accepted an appointment in London and was leaving immediately.

The news created quite a sensation. North Branston was leaving Dr. Vallotson's house in consequence of his disgraceful flirtation with Lady Karslake. Of this there was no doubt whatever in the public mind, and the flirtation in question promptly assumed immeasurably larger and more definite proportions. The old feeling against North came out of ambush, as it were, in the atmosphere of disgrace thus created about him. It was suddenly discovered that everybody had always known that he would never "do" in Alnchester, and that that immaculate city would be distinctly more herself when he was gone.

The day before his departure had come, and as North turned into the High Street after leaving Archdeacon French's house, he was passing through the street as a citizen of Alnchester almost for the last time. But there was no excitement or elation either about his face or manner. His expression was, perhaps, a shade more stern—a shade harder than usual; and his manner as he exchanged one or two farewells was coldly indifferent.

He had visited his last patient and was just issuing again into the street, when a figure passing along the pavement in front of the house, with collar turned up and hands plunged rather disconsolately into the pockets of his coat, stopped short and extricated one of his hands quickly. It was Bryan Armitage.

"Hullo, North!" he said; "how jolly to meet you! You're off to-morrow, aren't you?"

It was the cheery, boyish phraseology to which Bryan was always addicted, but his voice was hardly so absolutely in keeping with it as had been its wont. It seemed to have lost its ring. North Branston's attention, however, was not sufficiently disengaged to penetrate beyond the words themselves, and he answered briefly, "Yes," moving on as he spoke, as with a tacit understanding that Bryan would walk on with him.

Spells of silence were not usually in Bryan Armitage's line, but they had walked nearly the length of the street before he spoke again, and when he roused himself at last it was with an obvious effort.

"Well," he said lightly, "I don't suppose you are sorry to go. Alnchester isn't much of a place, after all. I suppose one does get rather narrow and stupid poked up in it. Sometimes I think I should like to get away myself."

There was a boyish dejection about the last sentences, and an obvious incapacity for detaching his mind from his own affairs against which the heavy reserve of North's silence struck oddly. Bryan Armitage plodded along, meditating for a minute or two, and then went on:

"I think I should have had a try at getting away if you hadn't been going, North. I've always thought, don't you know, that you might have had no end of influence over her and put her straight all round, only somehow you don't seem quite to hit it off."

North turned his face towards his companion.

"Who is she?" he enquired.

Bryan Armitage coloured hotly.

"Oh, hadn't we mentioned her?" he said confusedly. "Connie, I meant, of course. Didn't I say Connie? If you had been going to stay I should have just given you a hint, and you'd have managed things a great deal better than I can. But as you're not, I suppose I'd better hold on. Not that she listens to a word I say, worse luck!"

The tone was very rueful and just a little unsteady.

"What's wrong with her?" said North indifferently.

"There's nothing wrong with her!" was the quick retort. "Not likely! Only——" He paused a moment and went on hesitatingly and confidentially: "She's got all sorts of rum notions, don't you know. Beastly place Girton must be! And she wants setting right all over the place."

North Branston's face grew a shade colder.

"I think you may safely leave her to her mother, Bryan," he said; "her views won't be allowed to materialise themselves at any rate."

There was no answer, unless the sigh which proceeded from Bryan, weighted as it seemed with the trouble and responsibility of a universe, could be so called. They walked on in silence until they reached the end of the road in which was Dr. Vallotson's house. Then Bryan Armitage stopped abruptly:

"Good-bye, old fellow," he said huskily.

"Won't you come in?" asked North in a surprised tone.

"No," was the hasty answer. "I—I can't."

He stopped a moment, and then broke out suddenly:

"I say, North, I suppose it was awful cheek of me, but I proposed to—Connie, you know, at that confounded ball. And—and——"

"She refused you, I suppose?"

The question was brief enough, but it was not unsympathetic, and nothing was added to it on Bryan's hurried gesture of assent but the quick outstretching of North Branston's hand.

"Good-bye, old fellow!" said Bryan Armitage with a brave attempt at cheeriness. "I shall be after you soon, I dare say."

He turned away abruptly, and disappeared in the fast-falling twilight.

North Branston went on his way somewhat slowly, the air of preoccupation, broken for the moment by a touch of half-amused pity, settling upon him once more. He went into the house, and was going down the passage towards his own room, when he stopped and hesitated. Then, hearing a sound as of some one moving in the dining-room, he pushed open the door and went in. Constance was there alone, wearing her hat and jacket.

"Constance," said North Branston tersely, "give that note to your mother, please."

He held out a little square envelope as he spoke, but Constance did not take it.

"Oh, take it in yourself, North," she said rather impatiently. "I'm going out to tea, and I'm late as it is. Mother's only lying down in the drawing-room."

There was a moment's pause: North Branston neither assented nor refused. Then, as Constance continued severely, "You've not been in her room to-day," he cut her short, saying briefly, "Very well."

He was turning to leave the room when Constance called him back. Her eyes had fallen on a black-edged envelope lying on the table, and, as she lifted them again to North Branston, they were sharp with something that might have been described as curiosity, could such a sentiment have been ascribed to a regenerator of mankind.

"Put that card in the basket as you pass, North, will you?" she said. "I forgot it."

She pointed to the black-edged envelope on the table, watching North as he took it up mechanically. He looked at the direction on the envelope and paused a moment. But not the faintest change of expression was visible to Constance's eyes as he drew out the card, glanced at it, and carried it without comment out of the room. The card bore the words, "Lady Karslake," and added to the name, in Lady Karslake's own handwriting, were the words, "With thanks for kind enquiries.—P.P.C." Through the address, "Hatherleigh Grange," a pen had been drawn.

North Branston strode down the passage to the table, on which stood the card-basket, and then stood for a moment looking down at the card in his hand with a half-smile dawning about his mouth. It was the smile of a man who looks back at something in the past which the movement of life has left behind. It was cynical; but it also suggested that the reminiscence in question had about it a certain halo of interest and charm. He dropped the card into the basket and turned towards the drawing-room.

As a reminiscence, and as a reminiscence only, had Lady Karslake any place in North Branston's thoughts. Between the days, recent enough in point of time, when she had been an actual factor in his life—a hardly appreciated pleasure or refreshment—and the present, when she had passed utterly out of his sphere, there lay a great gulf; a gulf created by one of those sudden upheavals of long-smouldering natural forces by which the whole face of a landscape may be changed in the spiritual as in the natural world. In the stormy scene between himself and Mrs. Vallotson, interrupted by his summons to Hatherleigh Grange, the bonds which had warped his whole life, overstrained at last, had seemed suddenly to snap.

That scene, brief as it was, had burnt up all possibilities of his continued sojourn under Dr. Vallotson's roof. That departure which had hitherto been impossible to him had presented itself subsequently as an invitable step in the natural course of events. He had made his preparations quietly and decidedly. His plans being matured, and an appointment in London having been applied for and obtained, he had announced the fact to Mrs. Vallotson as a foregone conclusion. A moment's dead silence had followed his announcement, to be succeeded by a curt word or two of assent; and neither in that interview nor in any other had any reference been made by either to the night of the Infirmary ball.

The link of outward circumstance was broken; the long bitterness of everyday contact was to be henceforward a thing of the past. North Branston was a free man now, as he had never been in all his life before. But his demeanour was marked by none of the elation, none, even, of the

serenity which should naturally characterise a man thus liberated. The air of quiet well-being, which had pervaded him in the early days of his decision, had gradually worn away, to be replaced by the indifference which he had evinced during his parting interview with Archdeacon French; by the cold grimness with which he had passed through the Alnchester streets; and by the accentuated bitterness which lurked about his mouth and eyes now, as he opened the door of the drawing-room and went in.

The room was very quiet; there was, indeed, a curious hush over the whole house. Mrs. Vallotson lay on the sofa, her face turned from the door, still and peaceful. She was quite unoccupied, and the fact, in a woman so vigorous and stirring, was strikingly suggestive of absolute repose of mind and body. She stirred rather feebly as the door opened, and looked round. She saw North Branston, and her face changed suddenly and entirely; it became constrained and sharp, and the constraint was reflected in the face of her visitor as he came slowly towards her. In the expression of neither was there any of that softened tolerance that should come of the recognition and abandonment of an overstrained position; none of that sufferance which the prospect of a parting should make so easy.

She turned her head away, and drew the shawl with which she was wrapped close about her. She did not speak; and North said, stiffly and formally:

"I hope you are better to-night, Adelaide?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Mrs. Elliott has sent you this note; Constance asked me to bring it to you."

He handed her the envelope he held. She took it without looking at him, and let it lie beside her on the sofa.

"Thank you," she said. "It is of no consequence."

There was a moment's interval of silence; then North Branston, rather as with a perfunctory sense of what it behoved him to do, under the circumstances, than on any spontaneous impulse, took up a position in front of the fire, and remarked:

"It has been a wretched day."

"Yes."

"You have had no visitors, I suppose?"

The trivial conversationalism came oddly in his stiff, deep tones.

"No."

The monosyllable was abruptly, even irritably, spoken. But as she uttered it, Mrs. Vallotson also seemed to rouse herself to the conventional exigencies of the situation.

"I hope Jane has attended properly to your packing," she said.

"I believe so, thank you."

But as there are physical atmospheres in which no light can burn, so there are spiritual atmospheres in which no conversation can flourish. The words were followed by a frozen pause.

It was broken suddenly by Mrs. Vallotson. She had turned on her sofa, and was lying with her own face in shadow, and her black eyes fixed full upon North.

"Have you heard that Lady Karslake has left England?" she said.

North paused a minute; looking steadily towards her, though he could hardly see her face; the muscles round his mouth standing out distinctly.

"I have been told so," he said, "some twenty times in the course of the last two days."

"Have you heard it from herself?"

The voice rang out harsh and insistent; almost, as it seemed, beyond its owner's control. Again an instant passed before North Branston answered.

"No," he said.

She moved suddenly, as though to see his face better, bringing her own face into the full light of the lamp. He confronted her steadily with a white contempt stamped upon every feature, and their eyes met.

A moment later North Branston had turned on his heel abruptly, and had left the room. He went straight down the passage, shut himself into his own room, and set about some final preparations for his departure, his face set, his movements deliberate and concentrated—the movements of a man who keeps thought and feeling determinedly at bay.

The link of circumstances might break; the link of everyday contact might cease to be; but that other link, subtle, mysterious, by which this man and woman were held together, remained intact. The chain of antipathy held strong and unbroken. External freedom had come to North Branston; yet—even as he realised the fact, even as he stepped out, as it were, from the bitter bondage in which he had dwelt—fate made her inexorable fiat felt, and he knew that he was in bondage still. The jars of daily life, the grinding discords of antagonistic temperaments forced into constant contact, may be trivialities. But there is a degrading, all-pervading misery about the atmosphere which they create

which lifts them to a position not theirs by right; which sinks the cause in the effect; making them seem themselves the evil of which they are only the result. During the past four months, the rub, the jar, the strain of North Branston's home life—hopelessly wretched before this period set in—had intensified to the last pitch of endurance; it was but natural, therefore, that the personal contact had assumed for North Branston overshadowing proportions; that he should look upon the cutting off of that contact as the very cutting of the Gordian knot. It was in this assurance that he had made all his arrangements for leaving Alnchester. It was in this assurance, and with that sense of calm well-being before alluded to, that the first few days of his freedom had gone by.

Whence there had come to him the vague consciousness that that freedom was indeed an affair of externals only; through what sense there dawned upon him a consciousness of the chain still about him, he could not have said. He brought the consciousness one day from Mrs. Vallotson's presence, and it never left him again. It grew steadily and inexorably. The chain, from being a mere shadowy possibility, became an ever-present weight, pressing relentlessly upon his inmost consciousness, to be removed or lightened by no human effort. His visits to Mrs. Vallotson's sick-room were few. But each seemed to be endowed with a power stretching far beyond the limits of the brief moments he spent in her company, and to rivet the chain faster and faster. She hated him, and he realised her hatred—realised it now that it stood shorn of all the dust and clamour of conflict and clash, as he had never done before. She hated him. Poisonous as is all hatred; and it is a terrible truth that it is not less poisonous to the hated than to the hater; there was something about the irrepressible repulsion that he still touched in her—something mysterious, unnatural, unexplained—which exercised a subtle influence over him. It created in him, involuntarily, almost against his will, a horrible reflection of itself. It penetrated him through and through; withering every natural healthy impulse; stultifying all his ambitions; nourishing nothing that was not cynical and hard. The tangible bondage which lay behind had been bitter; compared with the intangible bondage that had succeeded it, it had been ease.

North Branston and Mrs. Vallotson met only once more before his departure, and then they met to part. But few words passed on either side; words chill and formal. The man went out into the world to do his own work in his own way; the woman remained in her husband's home. And the chain remained unbroken.

HOLBORN.

BEWILDERMENT is the only word for the attitude of one—not necessarily a visitor from another world; or one who has been "put away" for a series of years; or your country parson who, like Mr. Penley's famous impersonation, does not like London; but a regular cockney whose walks abroad have not recently lain in that direction—as he is set down by the statue at Holborn Circus. We don't seem to know these broad streets that radiate from this crowded centre, nor the buildings of florid aspect that contrast so strangely with the unpretentious dwellings of an earlier Holborn, and a dim vision of the past rises before the eyes.

'Tis thirty years ago, and here is Holborn Hill,
The heavy hill called Holborn,
Up which hath been many a sinful soul borne,

in days still more remote, that is, when "to be drawn backwards up Holborn Hill" was a genteel periphrasis for going to be hanged at Tyburn. But now it is a question of going down it with the roar of traffic sounding like a mighty cataract; and we seem to watch the omnibuses as they make the steep descent, and how the "cad" descends from his monkey perch and adroitly fits on the iron slipper to the stout hind wheel, and is on behind again without delaying the progress of the vehicle, which now grinds heavily over the muddy cobblestones into the dark valley below. Strange faces with strange headgear peep out from that old-fashioned 'bus with its diminutive windows and practicable door, the bang from which starts the horses after a stoppage; pretty faces mostly framed with bandeaux of smooth bright hair; stout, whiskered men look down from the knife-boards. And then the whole faded dingy scene disappears, and to-day is upon the screen once more, with bright sunshine and a world rolling briskly to and fro over the easiest of gradients.

But the valley below is still in existence, a sort of basement floor where markets are carried on, and where trades of all kinds are flourishing. And Snow Hill is also to the fore, and actually the "Saracen's Head,"

as large as life, but quite a palatial affair to what it must have been in Mr. Squeers's time. Here, too, is a fragmentary end of Shoe Lane, which we know well enough at the Fleet Street end, but which we did not expect to meet down here. And a pleasant shady place it is on a broiling day, too deep down for the sun to penetrate; while overhead in the flare and glare all the world goes by on the grand viaduct. Humble as is its name, Shoe Lane is one of the most ancient and distinguished of London's early streets, and is closely allied with Holborn, which is itself of high antiquity. Not perhaps of the very highest antiquity, for the Roman road passed near the city on higher ground to the north, along the line of Old Street, and so on towards Colchester. But ere Fleet Street had come into existence, and when the Strand was but the pebbled margin of the river bed; while galleys lay moored in the Fleet off Ludgate Stairs, and all round was wild forest, with moors and fennish wastes; the one practicable way out of the city towards the west was by Holborn Bridge, which crossed the tidal creek; and then if you were for the Court or Abbey you took the winding track which was even then known as Showell, or Shoe Lane. The main road was carried straight up Holborn Hill, which with its pleasant sunny aspect was bright with gardens and noble mansions. Here, early in the fourteenth century the then Bishop of Ely began to build a stately house for the see, his successor added vineyard, garden, and orchard, and in that garden were grown the strawberries which Shakespeare, following Hollinshed, has made famous. Says King Richard the Third:

> My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there.
> I do beseech you send for some of them.

Well, here is Ely Place, the site of the old palace, still a kind of guarded precinct, with gates and a porter in uniform, who frowns sternly on small boys who might be disposed to make a playground of the quiet precincts. Yet the place is by no means deserted even by the fashionable world, and dainty carriages may be seen driving up with clients for the famous solicitors of the place. And if you are from the Cape, with a hatful of diamonds, you may find a customer in Ely Place, to say nothing of dealers in plate, in bronzes, and "articles of vertu." In curious contrast to the tall dull houses of brick is the venerable chapel of St. Ethelburga, which by some happy accident was preserved when the rest of the episcopal buildings were demolished. Passing along a cool shaded cloister, one enters the sacred edifice, and in a moment mediæval times are come again. A gracefully proportioned Gothic chapel is here, with shafts and mouldings that bear the stamp of antiquity; while the faint perfume of incense, the gilded shrines, the images of saints and martyrs, the altar richly adorned for the services of the ancient rite, are strangely appropriate to their mediæval setting. The dim religious light from the rich painted windows falls upon a few kneeling figures —here an old woman in cloak and poke bonnet, there a workman in fustian with his basket of tools by his side. In the crypt beneath, the illusion is still more perfect. The Rembrandtesque gloom of the interior; the wide stone columns supporting massive oaken beams; the lights burning dimly here and there before some shrine or altar; and in one corner a flare of light where some bearded workmen, who might have come out of the canvas of some old Dutch master, are busy with the inner works of a "payre of organs;" all this with the clatter of Holborn sounding in the distance, gives the thrill of something delightfully strange and unexpected.

Coming into the glare of the nineteenth century once more, here is Hatton Garden with the Italian Church conspicuous at the end. And this is in truth the site of the Bishop's strawberry ground, which Queen Elizabeth got for her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, him of the "bushy beard and shoe-strings green," with

> His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,

who built a new house in the old pleasaunce. By the way, the Bishop, who was shamefully bullied by the Queen into giving away his garden grounds, stipulated that he might gather "twenty baskets of roses a year" from what was now Hatton's Garden. But Sir Christopher did not get much good from his plunder. He came to grief over his building transactions, and died broken-hearted at Ely Place, where a couple of centuries earlier old Gaunt gave up the ghost.

> Words, life, and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

But as a street, Hatton Garden dates from the Commonwealth, when the palace was used as a prison and the grounds about were laid out for building. The old house survived till the eighteenth century, and its ancient hall was used at one time by the serjeants-at-law. It had a fine brick gateway opening upon Holborn, where now stands the porter's humble lodge.

Crossing the road, another old landmark is to be found in the bewilderment of Holborn Circus. There—with its foundation some little distance below the level of the present street, but towering above the lowlier streets beyond—stands the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn; where a fine sycamore, with its roots in the old burying-ground, affords a pleasant refuge from the broiling sunshine. Here, on the churchyard wall, porters rest their loads; and an occasional passer-by may pause to notice the quaint, secluded building, which was just spared by the great fire, but was all tumbling to pieces, when it was eventually rebuilt under Wren's directions. Of Wren's time, doubtless, is the round-headed archway that opens into the charnel house beneath; and so also must be the quaint bas-relief representing the resurrection, with angels blowing trumpets from the clouds that fail to wake any reverberations from Holborn Circus. Yet what a crowd might issue from that gloomy portal! Forgotten City fathers with ink-horns hanging to their girdles; priests with the tonsure; Dr. Sacheverel in a full-bottomed wig; old dramatists such as Webster, of the Duchess of Malfy, in his gown as parish clerk; actors, too, and poets; Chatterton, pale and despairing; and Henry Neele, a forgotten bard of the Law Courts, who died by his own hand, and lies buried here; Strutt, too, of the "Sports," that excellent antiquary and engraver; and John Emery, the actor, whose Yorkshire Tyke was the admiration of the early nineteenth century.

Close by is Thavie's Inn, also a nice quiet spot, formerly an Inn of Chancery. Thavie was an armourer of the time of Edward the Third—probably a Welshman and in all likelihood a "Davie," and perhaps the original Taffy of English prejudice. There were plenty of Welshmen in Holborn in the days of the Plantagenets. They would lie in wait for your worship strutting down from your Inn towards the Court, and offer cheeses of the kind they called Talgar at less than market prices and without paying the City dues. The City bailiffs would run them in if they caught them, and generally kept a sharp look-out for forestallers and regratters and people with a taste for bargains. Thus, in 1375, one day after dinner, John Clerk, a poulterer, met John Spencer "with twenty-two geese in Holborne when coming to the city," and forthwith bought the whole flock. He was adjudged a forestaller, and the geese were forfeited to the use of the sheriff, so that there would be a rare goose pie at the next City feast.

And this reminds us that we are coming to the old City octroi boundary—the Holborn Bars—which, in a warrant of Henry the Fifth, is called the Bar of the Old Temple of London. For it will be remembered that the Knights Templars had their original seat just here, about the site of Staple Inn. This last is still happily in existence—one of the rarest bits of old London, with its charming timber frontage to the street and its pleasant quadrangle and gardens within. It is no longer an inn, indeed. The ancient foundation was sold for a price, and parted among those who ought to have preserved it; and its present guardian is the great insurance company on the other side of the way, who it is to be hoped will spare it for the sake of future generations.

Almost opposite is Furnival's Inn—a quiet, business-like precinct, devoted chiefly to solicitors, as it was in Mat Prior's time, who writes of his early prospects at his uncle's tavern:

> Or sent me with ten pounds to Furnival's Inn, to some good rogue attorney.

Below the Inn are some good old-fashioned London taverns, which were of note in the old coaching days—the "Black Bull," with its famous old sign, which seems to have been the scene of Mrs. Gamp's ministrations to the sick stranger; and the "Old Bell" adjoining, which is one of the most perfect survivals of the coaching and family hotels of the last century still left to us, with its quaint courtyard, its galleries, and wainscoted parlours.

Brook Street, a little higher up, has also its memories. Here lived and practised one Mr. Salkeld, an attorney, whose clerk, young Philip Hardwick—whom Mrs. Salkeld would send out to bring home meat and vegetables in the official blue bag—eventually became Lord Chancellor, and founded a great and wealthy family on the profits of his office. And hither came Chatterton, one of the brightest geniuses of his time, to starve for a while in a garret, and end his misery by poison. Ere yet it was a street, Brook House stood upon its site, where lived Greville Lord Brook, "the friend of Sydney, and no mean favourite of Queen Elizabeth, but who was here slain by one Hayward, a gentleman of his household, who killed himself with the same blood-stained sword." But the Brook Street of to-day has little to say to any of its former

associations. It is high, it is monumental; a poet would look for a garret there in vain.

But Leather Lane! Here is another epoch, another world almost. The houses almost meet above your head. A jolly, laughing crowd is in full possession of the narrow footway, and of so much of the roadway as is clear of the costers' barrows. Here are fruits and vegetables of all kinds, plentiful and cheap, with flowers, too, and actually a barrow-load of roses. A man is ladling them out with a basket: "Here y' are, a penny a baskit;" and people throng to buy them. "I'll have a hapronful," says a stout, jolly dame. The roses are a little tarnished—the spoils of some aristocratic fête perhaps—the urchins pick them up and pelt one another. Swarthy Italians stand at the doorways of the image shops; dark-eyed Contadini show their pearly teeth in smiles. Yes, there are happy moments to be had about Holborn.

Then there is the Gray's Inn Road, that has hardly a feature in common with the Lane we used to know, except the dingy backs of the old houses of the Inn. The tramcars, too, that hail for Hampstead or Stamford Hill, seem something new and strange for Holborn. Another moment brings us to the quiet squares and gardens of Gray's Inn, the trees under whose shadows Bacon took the air—he has left his footprint on the gravel walks, says Elia—and the favourite walk of many a thoughtful student of the law. It is a pleasant scene that might surely be made more accessible to the public. It is Gray's Inn as having once belonged to the Grays of Wilton, and formed part of the manor of Portpool, the memory of which still survives in Portpool Lane close by. It is all very quiet and business-like now about Gray's Inn, but there were masques and revels there in the old times, and the old hall witnessed the last of these gay scenes no later than in 1773, on the elevation of Mr. Talbot to the woolsack. After an elegant dinner, every member of each mess had a flask of claret besides the usual allowance of port and sack. The benchers then all assembled in the great hall, and a large ring was formed round the fireplace, when the master of the revels taking the Lord Chancellor by the right hand, he with his left took Mr. Justice Page, who, joined to the other serjeants and benchers, danced about the coal fire, according to the old ceremony, three times, while the ancient song accompanied with music was sung by one Toby Aston, dressed as a barrister.

Holborn still abounds in book shops, and we may remember that in Gray's Inn Gate once stood the shop of Jacob Tonson, Pope's genial Jacob, the resort of all the wit and wisdom of the age, and frequented by the fops and fine ladies as well as by the literati of the period. In Holborn, too, a couple of centuries ago might have been found, next to Furnival's Inn, a school of cookery conducted by one Edward Kidder, styling himself pastry master, but whose recipes embrace the whole scheme of the rising art.

It is High Holborn beyond the Gray's Inn Gate, a thoroughfare of handsome width, that many people may remember as almost choked by a row of houses, tumbledown but picturesque, with a nice shady passage at the back, a veritable bazaar, with plenty of old bookstalls and odd-and-end shops for the happy lounger. Middle Row was pulled down in 1868, an important event in Holborn's life history only surpassed by the opening of the Holborn Viaduct in great state by the Queen in the following year. A few more dates on the backward track of time may give us a just idea of the ancient fame of Holborn. In 1841, indeed, there had been a great reparation of the road, which before had often been but a quagmire. Then it was widened in 1674, repaired 1431—a few stones may have been put down between whiles—and as old Stow saith, it was first paved in 1417, when people were lavish with the gold they had acquired in the French wars. But there are more ancient "Billae pro reparatione Vicorum de Alegate et Holborne" in 1338 and 1353.

A little further on we come to Kingsgate Street, notable as the residence of the world-famous Sairey Gamp. There is still a barber's shop in the street with a striped pole, the whilom ensign, perhaps, of Paul Sweedlepipes, and the general features of the place have not changed much since Mr. Pecksniff's visit — how many years ago? As an antiquity the street is also noticeable, as here was actually the King's gate, by which he entered his private road, as to which we may quote a deposition of 1684. Andrew Lawrence, Surveyor of His Majesty's Highways, says that "His Majesty and his predecessors time out of mind have had a private way on the back side of Holbourne and Gray's Inn, and soe through Finsbury Fields to Kingsland," and as the

Stuart Kings used to drive that way to Theobalds by Cheshunt, it acquired the name of Theobalds Road, which a bit of the way has still retained as a London street. Doubtless it was the old Roman highway, deserted by the general line of traffic, which was thus utilised by their Majesties.

For a good many centuries now, Holborn has lost its aristocratic savour. In 1657 Howel, the chronicler of the Restoration, passing up Holborn sees Southampton House in course of destruction, and remarks how "Jupiter breaks great vessels and makes small ones of the pieces," but the site still retains the name of Southampton Buildings, and has a gateway into Staple Inn. The house was built by Wriothesley, Lord Southampton, Henry the Eighth's Lord Chancellor, a great torturer of heretics. The Southampton Row and Street in High Holborn commemorate a more recent lordship. And when, in Dr. Johnson's time, Evelina came to lodge over a hosier's shop in Holborn, she was a little bit ashamed to give her fine friends the address of such an unfashionable quarter. But your country cousin need not look for "lodgings to let" in Holborn just now, and as time goes on and one stately building rises after another, our old Holborn will form the commencement of a grand thoroughfare, far more imposing than its ancient rival of the Strand.

PAPER.

One of the most remarkable features of modern times is the enormous increase in the consumption of paper. It has been said that the stage of civilisation at which any nation has arrived may be gauged, with some degree of accuracy, by its consumption of soap; and whatever truth there may be in this, the same may, with perfect justice, be said of paper. And not only in its primary, and, so to speak, legitimate, use for literary purposes—writing and printing—does this hold good, but also in the multiplicity of various minor ways in which paper is turned to account. Of late years, indeed, paper has begun to occupy a unique position in the industrial world as a plastic and adaptable material eminently suited, after undergoing various manipulative processes, for a vast and ever-increasing multitude of uses.

When the world was young, in the infancy of literature, men committed their rude writings to the rough-and-ready materials provided by nature, which needed little or no preparatory processes. The bark and leaves of trees, hides already prepared for domestic use, fragments of pottery, sufficed in primitive ages. The Greeks and Romans advanced to tablets covered with wax, but by-and-by the advancing needs of literature and commerce were served by papyrus, with which Egypt for centuries supplied that circumscribed portion of the world which was so far advanced as to require stores of writing materials. There is no evidence that papyrus was grown for commercial purposes outside of Egypt during the whole Roman period, and the industry of its growth and manufacture must have been a large and profitable one. In the time of Tiberius a sedition was nearly caused by a scarcity of paper, and a rebellious paper-maker, in the days of Aurelian, boasted that he could equip an army from the profits of his business—and did it too.

Parchment was invented by the Greeks when papyrus was scarce, and the Middle Ages re-invented it. There is evidence that linen rags were used in paper-making as early as the eighth and ninth centuries. In paper of that period the fibre was chiefly linen, with traces of cotton, hemp, and other fibres. The known specimens are of Oriental origin, and appear to have been clayed, like modern papers, the material used being a starch paste manufactured from wheat. The oldest MS. written on cotton paper in England is in the British Museum, and dates from 1049 A.D., and the oldest on the same material in the Paris National Library is dated 1050. In 1085 the Christian successors of the Spanish Saracens made paper of rags instead of raw cotton, which had been formerly employed.

Nowadays very little paper is made from the good old linen rags which used to suffice for the greater part of the manufacture. Bank of England notes are made from the best linen—not, however, in the form of rags, but quite new and unused. The finest handmade papers, used almost entirely for the production of "editions de luxe" and similar high-class book work, and some finer kinds of writing papers, are all that are now made from rags. The supply of this form of raw material would now, in fact, be utterly inadequate to meet the ever-increasing demands of consumption. But fortunately—in one sense—for litera-

ture, and the other paper-using departments of modern life, there is no lack of raw material: less perfect, it is true, but still suitable enough to fill the gap. With the ever-increasing demand, new substances, strange enough some of them, which would have been looked on in the old-fashioned days of the paper trade as utterly impracticable and ridiculously impossible, have been brought into requisition. The changed conditions have necessitated a much more extended and intimate application of chemical science. Without its aid advance would have been impossible, and a state of matters might have ensued too terrible to contemplate.

As a matter of practical experience, paper can be manufactured out of almost anything that can be pounded into pulp. It is said that over fifty kinds of bark are now used, and among other matters which have been found applicable are banana skins, bean-stalks, pea-vines, cocoanut fibre, clover, timothy hay, straw, sea and fresh-water weeds, and numerous grasses. The incongruous list may be further swelled by hair, fur, wool, asbestos—which furnishes an article indestructible by fire—hop-plants, and husks of every kind of grain. Leaves make good strong paper; the husks and stems of Indian corn have been tried; and almost every kind of moss can be utilised. There are patents for making paper from sawdust and shavings, from thistles and thistledown, from tobacco-stalks and tan-bark. Nothing apparently comes amiss to the pulping mill, though naturally vegetable fibres are most easily workable and yield the best results. The most largely used of the newer, though comparatively legitimate raw materials, are esparto grass and wood pulp.

As an interesting experiment, the proprietors of an important American newspaper recently undertook to show in how short a time the whole process of paper-making and printing could be accomplished. The undertaking started with a poplar tree in its natural situation in the forest, and the problem was to have it converted into pulp and paper, and sold in the streets as a printed journal, in the shortest possible time. To chop and strip the necessary quantity of wood and load it in a boat took three hours; manufacturing the pulp occupied twelve hours; making the pulp into paper took five hours; transporting the manufactured paper to the newspaper office, eighty minutes; while to finish up with, on the paper thus produced at utmost speed, one thousand copies of the journal were printed in ten minutes, making in all for the whole process, from inception to completion, just twenty-two hours.

But this remarkable all-embracing power of the paper-mill is not without its drawbacks. Though, as has been already noted, in one sense fortunate, in another it is not, with respect to literature at least. It has been pointed out by M. Delisle, librarian of the Bibliothèque Nationale, that paper is now made of such inferior materials that it will soon rot, and very few of the books now published have the chance of a long life. The books of the present day will all have fallen to pieces before the middle of next century. The genuine linen rag paper was really calculated to last, and even the oldest books printed on it, if kept with due care, show very little of the effect of time; but the wood-pulp paper now largely used, in the making of which powerful acids have been employed, is so flimsy that the very ink corrodes it, and time alone, with the most careful handling, will bring on rapid decay. Perhaps from one point of view this is not altogether an unalloyed misfortune. Only remnants of present day literature will survive for the information of future generations, and great national collections, such as that in the British Museum Library, formed at great expense, and intended to be complete and permanent, will offer to the literary historian of, say, the twenty-first century, but a heterogeneous mass of rubbish, physical laws thus consigning to oblivion a literature of which but a tithe is intellectually worthy to survive. The paper-maker thus unwittingly assumes the function of the great literary censor of the age. His criticism is mainly destructive, and it is too severe. Without the power of selective appreciation, he condemns to destruction good and bad alike.

Mulhall, in his "Dictionary of Statistics," puts the world's total consumption of paper in 1882 at one million and fifty thousand tons; this quantity being the product of nearly four thousand mills, employing over a quarter of a million of hands and capital exceeding sixty-two million pounds. The largest quantity of the paper made is consumed by printers, Mulhall's estimate being four hundred and fifty-five thousand tons; and, as writing-paper takes up an additional one hundred thousand tons, it follows that literature, in its widest application, absorbs half the paper made. Curiously enough, the same authority gives the next place to wall-

paper, which accounts for no less than two hundred thousand tons. Production has, of course, gone on increasing; and later estimates put the consumption at three thousand million pounds annually. On working out the average annual consumption of each paper-using country, it is found that each inhabitant of the United Kingdom uses about twelve pounds a year; each Frenchman, about eight and a half; each German, nine; each Australian, six; each Italian, about four; each Austrian, three and one-third; each Spaniard, two; each Russian, one and one-fifth; and each inhabitant of the United States, ten and one-fifth.

In those statistics no account is taken of the enormous quantities of paper which are made and consumed in such Eastern countries as China, Japan, and Corea, where it enters into the daily life of the people to a degree that it has not yet reached in Western countries. The peculiar indigenous civilisation of these countries has developed the paper industry along curious lines, and the Coreans are even said to excel the Chinese and Japanese in the multifarious ways in which they use it. Their paper is made from the bark of a bush of the mulberry order, and has special qualities of toughness and durability, which render it suitable for many purposes. The windows of Corean houses are formed of wooden latticed frames covered with paper, transparent enough to admit light. The floors are covered with oil-paper a quarter of an inch thick. Lanterns, fans, and tobacco-pouches are made of paper; and a very thick kind is used for making trunks and packing-boxes. The huge, conical rain-hats, which form such a curiously prominent part of the native attire, and are fastened over the ordinary black hat in wet weather; are made of oil-paper, and large waterproof coats are made of the same material.

The process of paper-making consists essentially in the matting or felting together in a compact mass of fibres, mainly of vegetable origin. The final aim of the various preliminary processes is the production of a fluid pulp of uniform consistency and freed from foreign matters, and when this pulp is spread out in thin sheets, from which the water is drained away, ordinary writing or printing paper is the result. But the pulp, instead of being spread out, may be moulded into any desired shape, and if subjected to sufficient pressure and thoroughly dried, the material becomes as hard as the hardest wood, may be worked with tools as easily as wood, takes polish or paint excellently, and, unlike wood, is almost indestructible by damp and other atmospheric influences. The plasticity of the raw pulp and the strength and durability of articles, large or small, made from it, account for the many industrial novelties in which paper performs such an important part.

When a strong fibre is used, the pulp can be transformed into a substance so hard that it can scarcely be scratched, and capable of serving many of the ends for which iron and steel are employed. In Germany and in the United States railway carriage wheels made of it are found to be more durable than iron. All the wheels of Pullman cars are said to be made of paper; but the statement sometimes made, that they are entirely composed of it, is erroneous. The paper which forms part of the wheel is not visible, as it is covered with iron and steel, forming only the body of the wheel in the form of a block four inches thick, round which there is a steel rim of two or three inches in thickness. This steel rim comes in contact with the rails, and circular iron plates are bolted on to cover the sides.

This application is a severe test; but perhaps one still more severe is the manufacture of horseshoes from paper. These have been found in Germany to be a great success, and they have been adopted for shoeing the horses of the German cavalry and artillery regiments. They are made of layers of parchment-like paper, cemented together by a special paste, and compressed by hydraulic power. The shoes thus constructed are impervious to water, and being more elastic than the ordinary kind, are said to improve the horse's walk and afford a very secure foothold.

There are indications that paper may even become the building material of the future. The "Hospital" some time ago gave a description of a new and portable hospital made entirely of compressed paper, large enough to hold twenty beds, and so light and compact as to form, when taken down, a load for no more than three trucks, which are so planned as to form the basis of the building when erected. Floors, walls, ceilings, and doors are all made of compressed paper boards, each part numbered, so that the whole can be taken down or built up in an hour or two. The windows are made of wire gauze coated with transparent celluloid. The whole being varnished, is well adapted to cleanliness; and the building, which hails from the United States, is designed for temporary work in fever-stricken districts.

In Bergen there is a church built entirely of paper. It has been rendered waterproof by a solution of quicklime and other ingredients, and will seat a thousand people in comfort.

The papier-maché dome of the new Observatory building at Greenwich is the largest application of this material for roofing purposes which has yet been made in this country. The whole roof, including the steel framework, weighs over twenty tons, and in any other material would have weighed much more. The necessary lightness for a purpose such as this, where the whole roof has to be capable of being revolved by mechanical means under the direct control of the observer, and by the expenditure of the smallest possible amount of energy on his part, has not been attained by the sacrifice of any strength.

A Breslau manufacturer has even built a factory chimney, fifty feet high, of blocks or bricks made of compressed paper pulp, joined together with silicious cement.

It is thus evident that there is no serious obstacle, in a constructive sense, to the extended use of paper for house construction, and as a building material it possesses numerous advantages. The properly prepared compressed paper boards are not nearly so inflammable as wood, and by chemical means they can be rendered absolutely fireproof, or the pulp of which they are formed may in the first instance be made of incombustible substances, such as asbestos. Paper is likewise waterproof, or can be made so very readily by saturation with asphalt, or in many other ways. It is a bad resonator, and consequently well adapted to prevent the passage of sound, and more especially is it a bad conductor of heat, while it is less affected by changes of temperature than any other commonly used building material.

An outline of one process for preparing paper pulp for the manufacture of building material will suffice to show the curiously heterogeneous mixture from which wonderfully strong, light, and durable building stuff is produced. Any ordinary stock used for paper-making may be employed, and during the course of its manipulation there is added to the pulp a solution consisting of one part of starch, one part of gum-arabic, one part of bichromate of potash, and three parts of benzine, to forty-four parts of pulp. The paper made from this combination is coated with a cement made of linseed oil and glue, and is then kept under heat and pressure for a week, so that the boards may become thoroughly cured and seasoned. The secondary ingredients and their proportions may be varied according to the precise nature of the finished product desired and the application intended to be made of it, and it is within the bounds of possibility that the time may come when not only the outer walls of houses but all their internal fittings and constructive decorations — doors and window frames, mantelpieces, ceilings, and so on—will be made of paper, replacing wood to a great extent, and advantageously in many respects —notably in the entire absence of warping or shrinking from heat, and cold, and damp. For decorative purposes a material known as "carton pierre," or stone paper, is largely used where strength and toughness are desired. Its preparation and manipulation are so simple as to be within the reach of the amateur decorator, as it is made from paper cuttings boiled with glue, flour, plaster of Paris, and whiting, and then moulded into any desired shape.

There is nothing to prevent paper, prepared as indicated, from being manufactured into furniture and household articles of every description. Black walnut picture-frames are made of it, and are so coloured as to be indistinguishable from the genuine wood. In Paris there has been exhibited a piano, of which the entire case was made of compressed paper, the hard surface of which exhibited a brilliant cream-white polish, richly ornamented with arabesques and floral designs, and painted with miniature medallions. A well-known industrial journal recently gave its readers full instructions for the building of organs, all the pipes of which could be made of paper if so desired.

The Berlin fire department recently received a remarkable addition to its equipment in the form of a fire-engine, the carriage of which is entirely built of paper. Body, wheels, poles, and all the rest are beautifully finished, and while in every respect equal to wood, the weight is considerably less—a point of much importance in such a construction, securing greater promptness in reaching the seat of a fire.

In France beakers and laboratory vessels, capable of withstanding acids, are now made of paper—the pulp from which they are produced containing eighty-five per cent. of wood and fifteen per cent. of rags. After being dried, the newly-moulded vessels are put in a closed cylinder in connection with an air pump, by means of which the air is

drawn out of the pores, which are then filled by a varnish of resins, ether, and oils, while subsequent chemical processes to which they are subjected render them fairly strong, flexible, and impermeable to liquids. After this it is not surprising to find that paper gas-pipes are now being made. The material used for this purpose is Manila paper, cut into strips equalling in width the length of pipe to be made. These are passed through a bath of melted asphalt, and then wrapped firmly round an iron core until the required thickness is attained. Powerful pressure is next applied, the outside surface is strewn over with sand, and the whole cooled in water. The core is then removed, and the outside of the pipe coated with a waterproof composition. These pipes are said to be perfectly gas-tight, and to be much cheaper than iron pipes. Possibly the adoption of paper in some form for the manufacture of water-pipes might save householders some of the annoyance arising from the bursting of pipes after frost. An ingenious individual is reported to have made tobacco pipes from paper, by moulding from pulp or by pressing superimposed sheets of absorbent paper into shape. In either case the necessary resistance to burning has to be provided for by lining the bowl with porous earthenware.

So far has the adaptation of paper to peculiar uses gone in the United States that paper boats are to be tried in the navy. The material is so treated, that it is claimed that the boats may be submerged indefinitely without being any the worse, while they are as much as fifty per cent. lighter than the ordinary wooden boats. In the States, also, they are said to be making paper telegraph-poles, which are vastly superior to wooden ones in their power of resisting the deteriorating influences of the atmosphere and the ravages of insects.

A Swedish engineer has invented a paper match, and it has been proposed, if not actually tried, to substitute a preparation of paper for the wood of lead pencils, to supply the deficiency in the supply of cedar wood now being felt. Artificial teeth have been made from paper, and have been found to wear well. In Germany a great trade is done in paper bed-quilts, which are said to be very warm and much cheaper than the ordinary kind, and another German invention takes the shape of paper stockings. These are made of a specially-prepared paper stock, and it is claimed for them that they have a very beneficial action on perspiring feet, absorbing the moisture as fast as it is formed and so keeping the feet dry and warm. The equable temperature they aid in maintaining in the shoes is said to be a great preventive of colds.

The ingenuity of the paper-maker, on the whole applied beneficially in all these and many other curious and remarkable directions, has lent itself, in at least one way, to deception. The American genius, so fruitful in trade tricks, has matched its wooden hams and artificial coffee-beans by paper hosiery yarns. The audacious inventor has devised means by which he can form a strand of paper, polish it, give it a covering of woollen fibre, knit it into goods, and then palm it off on the hosiery trade. It so closely resembles genuine good woollen yarn, that at sight deception is easy. But use rapidly exposes the deceit. The goods fall to pieces as soon as they become damp, and they cannot stand any wear. They are, in fact, yarn only in appearance.

A curiosity worth noting here is the production of iron paper, as a "tour de force" of iron manufacture. A specimen was exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and forthwith ironmakers entered into a lively rivalry as to the thinness to which iron could be rolled. Sheets were rolled to the average thickness of one-eighteen-hundredth part of an inch, which is much thinner than tissue paper, as one thousand two hundred sheets of the thinnest tissue paper made measure an inch. These iron sheets were perfectly smooth and easy to write on, though they were porous when looked at against a strong light.

This necessarily brief outline of a large subject would be incomplete without some reference to some of the remarkable transformations which paper or its raw materials undergo by the application of chemical science. Celluloid, a comparatively new product, which enters largely into commerce in an immense variety of articles of use and ornament, is made directly from paper by transforming the cellulose of which it is mainly composed into gun cotton by saturating it with a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acids. After thorough washing the mass is reduced to pulp, and mixed with twenty to forty per cent. of its weight of camphor, and thoroughly ground up. The pulp is spread out in thin sheets, which are subjected to great pressure until dry, when they are rolled in heated rollers, from which they come out in elastic sheets capable of being worked up in an endless number of forms. A process for the making of artificial silk by a complicated succession of

chemical and mechanical manipulations from the ordinary wood pulp from which many kinds of paper is made, has recently come into prominence, and promises to develope into a successful industry. By the potent alchemy of chemistry acetic acid can be made from paper pulp, and sugar from old linen rags.

"IF!"

If you were sitting talking to me there,
There—in that chair;
If I were watching your dear face—your face
So passing fair;
Holding your hands in mine, my joy would be
A perfect thing;
And my glad heart within my breast would thrill
And lilt and sing;
As some sad bird who thinks her nestlings gone,
Flutters and cries,
Then finds them 'neath a hiding-place of leaves,
And sorrow dies,
The while her clear song rises to the sky
In ecstasies!

THE CLASSICS IN EDUCATION.

When one is told, as one has been told, that some of those who were most prominent in the recent affair with Lobengula's followers in Matabeleland were men who were refused admission to Sandhurst and to Woolwich because of their imperfect acquaintance with Latin and with Greek, one pauses to consider. One wonders if, in refusing them, our military authorities were not guilty of a blunder. Suppose the wheel of fashion were to take a twirl, and, before our citizens were allowed to fight the battles of their native land, it should be considered indispensable that they should have a colloquial knowledge of the extinct tongues of the Aztec races. Should we not think such a requirement a little arbitrary, pedantic, absurd? And it is not clear that for an officer Latin and Greek are so very much more necessary than Aztec. It is, to a large degree, an affair of literary sentiment. Probably when the moment of imminent danger does come, and our troops are in instant need of competent commanders, the theory that a classical education is an indispensable part of a commanding officer's equipment will be shown to be purely pedagogic.

When we point out that few of the generals who fought and won the great battles which have gone to make the history of the world were, in the scholastic sense, educated at all, we are reminded, with somewhat unnecessary persistence, that during the last generation the conditions of warfare have entirely changed. Moltke is cited as the up-to-date type of successful general; the man who was a soldier and student to his finger-tips. It is suggested, inferentially, that the men who did before would not do now. But is this quite so certain after all? If a Napoleon Buonaparte were to rise from the ranks again to-morrow, what is the betting that he would not sweep through Europe quite in the old way? It is certain that in the Russo-Turkish war some of the finest feats on both sides were done by men who, scholastically, were most deficient. We laugh at the Chinese system of government by competitive examination. Are we not in danger of carrying the thing to an equally absurd length ourselves?

By all means let our officers be both physical and intellectual giants—if the thing be possible. Whether a capacity for assimilating the dead languages is an inevitable sign of intellectual pre-eminence is, however, an open question. For my part I doubt it. Some men have a natural taste for languages, some for mechanics, some for mathematics, some for chemistry. To various men their several gifts. Why should one gift be held, as a matter of course, to be a sign of intellectual strength rather than another? Why should the great engineer, who could never master even the Latin declensions, be adjudged to be necessarily the mental inferior of the man who breathes in Latin and dreams in Greek?

In this matter we are, after all, in some respects wiser than our fathers. They seem to have denied that a man could have had the education of a gentleman who was not versed both in Latin and in Greek; though he might be, and very often was, versed in nothing else. We do admit that a man may be an educated man who yet cannot for the life of him give you the meaning of a single Homeric line. There are many such who are admitted by the universal voice to be men of light and leading. Still we have not made so much progress as we might and should have done. As witness the refusal of our rulers to admit that soldiers can have sufficient knowledge of their trade to lead us on to victory if, for any cause whatever, they have failed to wrestle with the modern versions of the ancient tongues of Greece and Rome.

In the eyes of some men the suggestion that Greek and Latin may, after all, be educational superfluities is equivalent almost to blasphemy. And yet it is strange how any one who has some acquaintance with the

inner life of our Universities can doubt that it is so. Oxford and Cambridge turn out every year many men who are proficient students of the dead languages, and nothing more. Not a few such continually reside within those halls of ancient learning. Is any one prepared to say that a man who knows Greek and Latin, and practically nothing else, is in any wide and just sense of the word an educated man? If so, it is because there is abroad in the world a very loose idea of what education really means. The man who can talk in Greek as if it were his native tongue is not necessarily any more educated than the man who can perform prodigies in mental arithmetic. The one may be just as much the result of a knack, of a certain intellectual twist, as the other. To suppose that because a man has the language at his finger-tips, and knows it very much better than he does his own, he is, therefore, saturated with the atmosphere of the Greek civilisation, and that, in any laudatory sense of the word, his type of intellect is Greek, is to suppose the purest nonsense. Such an one may be, and not seldom is, the sort of person of whom Wordsworth said that a primrose was to him a primrose and nothing more.

It may be doubted if any one branch of learning has a stronger educational influence than any other—and this although all the dons alive may hold up their hands aghast. Fashion is omnipotent in matters of scholarship as in all else. There are certain things which it is held "de rigueur" that a man should know. For instance, a knowledge of classics is considered to be the distinguishing mark of a gentleman. It is less the case to-day than it was yesterday, but still the thing prevails. It is quite on the cards that, in the next century, a knowledge of science may be held to mark the gentleman. But it will not therefore follow that science, any more than Greek or Latin, is an indispensable part of a man's education.

There can be no doubt whatever as to the reason why, in England, the dead languages play such an important part in competitive examinations, and especially in examinations for the army. The average poor man knows better than to spend his money on having his son instructed in useless knowledge. He has him taught only those things which are likely to be of practical use to him in his daily life. On such a list classics certainly find no place. Poor men are not wanted in the army—brains or no brains—with or without fighting capacity. The British army is, as regards its officers, as much a close preserve as it ever was. Those who have the pulling of the strings do their best to keep the poor man out. They may be right, or they may be wrong, but they do it. They know that one of the finest safeguards against the incursion of the poor man's son is the insistence, as a preliminary to all advancement, on an adequate knowledge of the classics. Classics mean pounds, shillings, and pence. The poor man's son being without a satisfactory supply of the one is, therefore, and as a matter of course, without a satisfactory supply of the other. So the poor man's son stays out.

Let us consider for a moment what education is, or rather what it ought to be, and we shall at once perceive the absurdity of an arbitrary pronouncement to the effect that this or that line of study forms an indispensable part of a man's education. We are not all formed in one likeness. As Paul had it, there are diversities of gifts. This is an old story, but it is necessary that it should be continually insisted upon. Where Brown is strong is precisely where Jones is weak. It is an open question whether it is possible to supply Jones from without with that which he has not within him. For instance, people are still disputing as to whether a poet is born or made; as to whether, that is, by means of education you can supply Jones with the poet's gift when, naturally, he has it not. Though the disputants may rage, for my part I am persuaded that you cannot. That which is born with us we have, and that which is not born with us we shall never have; no, not though all the pundits strain themselves in their struggle to give it us. In such a matter, it seems to me that a man can speak best from his own experience; a "human document" is occasionally worth a good deal of loose generalisation. And I know there are things which no man could ever teach me, or ever shall. To take one: with my own unaided hand I never could draw a decently straight line. It is not for want of trying. When I was a lad I used to try, and try, and fail—with bitter tears. My hand and eye together could never convey an idea of form. My attempts at even the elements of drawing have always been ludicrous. In me the reproductive side of the artistic faculty is wholly and even egregiously wanting; no system of education could ever give it me. On the other hand, I know that things have been born with me

which, unless they are born with a man, I doubt strongly if he will ever have. I have what is really a parrot-like capacity for acquiring languages. "Dump" me in any remote corner of the world you like, leave me in constant intercourse with the natives—be their tongue what it may—and at the end of three months I would undertake, linguistically, to hold my own with the best of them. On leaving them, more than probably at the end of another three months I should have forgotten every word I had acquired. With me, as regards languages, it is distinctly a case of easy come and easy go.

I learned my Latin and Greek abroad. When I was twenty, at a great foreign university, in both tongues I more than held my own; I had a smattering of Hebrew besides. It is some time since I was twenty. I have never looked at a classic author since I went out into the world. I doubt if to-day I could read a page of any Latin writer. I have actually forgotten how to form the characters of the Greek alphabet. As for Hebrew it is with me as though it had never been. More than that, when I was a boy, German was to me as my mother tongue; I wrote and spoke in it as I write and speak in English to-day. Yet when a week or two ago a German friend sent me a German letter, I experienced no slight difficulty in deciphering what appeared to me to be his country's hieroglyphics.

These things are stated in support of the argument that proficiency in Latin and in Greek is no more a sign of intellectual supremacy than is proficiency, say, in French and in German. One man has, naturally, a turn for Greek, just as another has, naturally, a turn for mathematics. From my point of view, any one in his spare moments ought to be able to learn Greek, but the mere thought of mathematics makes me shudder. I regard a mathematician as one of the wonders of the world; while I should be more Greek than were any of the Greeks long before any product of my raising took a prize at a horticultural show. Educationalists, therefore, as it appears to me, should not expend themselves in useless efforts. It is not the part of education to attempt the impossible. Ascertain what a man has, and educate that. Surely the desire to do this ought to be the beginning and the end of education. Every man has something; you may be sure of it, although you may contemn the thing he has because it is not the thing you have. Education is akin to character. What intellect is is not so clear. One sometimes hears men spoken of as "highly intellectual" who, if one could subject them to some sort of chemical analysis, would prove to be nothing of the kind. Stylus, for example, is an authority on the cuneiform writings. He is on that account regarded as a man of the highest intellect. But, if you once come to know Stylus, you will begin to doubt—and with reason—if he really is what he is supposed to be. The truth is, that the problem of the cuneiform character had an attraction for Stylus's peculiar mental constitution.

There are men who invariably are interested in anything of the nature of a cryptograph. They will display amazing patience and ingenuity in their search for the hidden key. There is, probably, no form of cryptology which, in the end, will baffle their trained natural instinct. Stylus is a man of this type. It happens that he has turned his attention to that branch of cryptology in which kudos is most likely to be gained. As a matter of fact, there are ciphers which are almost, if not quite, as difficult to puzzle out as the key to the cuneiform characters. The men who do puzzle them out are, out of their own line, very often very ordinary individuals. They were, like Stylus, born with a knack in a certain direction, which knack they have educated for all it is worth. But that knack is all they were born with, and that is all they have to-day. Intellect, as apart from instinct, can scarcely be said to come into the story of their lives at all.

The idea that a knowledge of the classics necessarily implies a man of education—in the true sense of education—is based upon a fallacy. The fallacy consists in the perfectly gratuitous supposition that the man who knows Latin and Greek is necessarily in touch with the spirit, the intellect, the height and the depth, the glory of the great extinct civilisations. One might as reasonably say that the man who knows English is, therefore, necessarily in touch with Shakespeare; that the man who knows German is, therefore, necessarily in touch with Goethe; or he who knows Italian, in touch with Dante. As Lord Dundreary used to exclaim—absurd! Obviously it is at least doubtful whether any man now living is, or can be, in touch with the ancient civilisation, even the echoes of which have long since died away. There may be men, gifted in a rare degree with the faculty of imagination, who may sup-

pose themselves to be in such a position; but they can get no further than the supposition. My own impression is that, if they were to wake to-morrow morning and were to find themselves in Athens in its prime, they would find themselves not only with everything to learn, but with everything to unlearn, too. They would be disillusioned in the twinkling of an eye. Because a man has a journeyman acquaintance with the mere structure of a language, does it follow that he has pinions with which to sweep through the air with Homer, or that he can keep step with Plato? What appreciation has the Italian priest, who perpetually scribbles Latin, of the days and the nights of Horace?

But, says the defender of the classical teaching—which is very far, sometimes, from being the classical learning—think of the literature of Greece and of Rome; can he be called an educated man to whom that literature is non-existent? To this there is, to begin with, one obvious reply: it is one thing to know a literature, it is altogether another to appreciate it, or to have the capacity to appreciate it. There are multitudes of so-called Greek and Latin scholars who are as devoid of the sense of literary perception as the dodo. The man who taught me more Greek than any one else, and whose fame, as a Grecian, was world-wide, cared much more for a trivial and disputable question of grammatical nicety than for the music of a line. Though I have "Paradise Lost" by heart, if I have none of its spirit—worse, if I want none—how does my knowledge avail me? Few men will be prepared to assert that mnemonics, merely as mnemonics, tend to intellectual advancement.

There is another, and, possibly, an even weightier answer to our supposititious defender of the classical teaching. The literature of Greece and of Rome is not the only literature which the world contains. Men are beginning more and more to doubt if it is even the most important literature which the world contains. One may, at least, unhesitatingly affirm that the man who, knowing the literature of Greece and of Rome, knows nothing of the literature of his own country, is, in every sense of the word, less well educated than the man who, knowing the literature of his own country, knows nothing of the literature of Greece and of Rome. It is foul shame to a man that the great intellects of his own land should be to him as strangers. No Greek or Roman worthy of the name would have allowed such a stain to sully his escutcheon. Unfortunately, the greater a man's knowledge of the older classics the less is his knowledge apt to be of the classics of his native land, whether his native land is England, Germany, or France.

Such an one, not seldom, may be regarded as dead while he still is living. The men who are advocating the study of Greek and of Roman literature, or of any literature, to the prejudice of that of their native land, are doing their best, not for the spreading of education but, for the spreading of ignorance. The time is not far distant when the world will regard such persons as we of the present generation regard the alchemists, as men who spent at least the larger portion of their lives in pursuit of a vain thing. If you must study literature at all, be you peer or pauper—indeed, all the more if you be peer—first study the literature of your own country; then the literature of any other land you please. It is certain that the more you know of your own country and of your own countrymen, and of the great works which your fathers did, the better, and the better educated, citizen you are likely to be.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I would not narrow a student's boundaries. All learning is good. There is nothing, as it seems to me, which it profiteth not a man to know. None of us can learn everything. Most of us can learn but little. It falls to the lot of many of us to learn, so far as books are concerned, just those things which the teachers choose to teach us, and those things only. Everywhere is the child who feels that he is being taught what he would rather not learn, and what it will do him no good to learn. But he cannot speak with an articulate voice. Even if he could, the chances are that he would not be listened to. Think of the myriads who have groaned under the tyranny of the classical learning! How many have had Latin hammered and Greek caned into them? What percentage have profited by what they have suffered? One wonders. Mr. James Payn has told us recently how much his classical education cost in money and in pain, and at what value, now he is in a position to judge, he himself appraises it. I learned Latin and Greek to serve certain private purposes of my own—certainly not for the love of learning them. When those purposes had been served, I forgot what I had learned as quickly as I could, and that was very quickly. My love was in another's

keeping. Latin and Greek profited me nothing. I do not believe they profit one per cent. of those who are compelled to learn them. I do not believe that a thing was ever done in Rome which has not been done better out of it. I do not believe that a line was ever penned in Greece which could not be more than matched elsewhere. And I am persuaded that such is the opinion of untold myriads of human beings who, to their sorrow, at some period or other of their lives, have been in a position to judge.

The moral of it all is this: let there be the widest possible latitude of choice in the things which a child or a youth must learn. Because we have acquired a certain branch of knowledge, and prize it at its full worth, do not let that be a sufficient reason why we should compel some one else to learn it too. Let that some one else have liberty to choose. What we prize may be valueless to him. He may regard our reasons for setting a high price on the thing we have learned as of no account. It is conceded that every one must and should learn something, as much, indeed, as he possibly can. He must learn the three Rs, we are all agreed as far as that; but after we have reached that point, agreement ends. Beyond that, do let us agree upon at least one point—to differ. There may be agreement even in difference; pray let us have it if we can.

As regards the subjects which should be made compulsory at competitive examinations, surely this may be assumed to be a case in which the punishment should be fitted to the crime. There is no ostensible reason why a post office sorter should be compelled to pass an examination in the theory and practice of bridge building. If there are a thousand candidates and one vacancy, which the man with the highest number of marks is to regard as his reward, then if any of the candidates, with a view of adding to the tale of their marks, choose to take up bridge building as an "extra," let them. But use no compulsion if they do not choose. One fails to see of what practical use Latin and Greek will be to an officer on the field of battle, or off the field of battle, for the matter of that. The methods of the ancient warriors are as dead as the warriors who practised them. If they are not, they may be studied, in a thousand and one translations, with perfect ease. What an officer requires is to know how to fight, not only himself, but principally, as it were, by proxy—Latin and Greek will not teach him to do that. They may be pretty playthings for the leisured man in his leisure moments; certainly they are nothing more. Under existing conditions it seems not unlikely that the great general of the near future will be the man of science. The next great war will, not impossibly, be won in the laboratory. Officers and men alike will be little else than puppets, moved hither and thither in accordance with the chemist's plans. This being so, it is amusing to note how, in the British army, stress is laid upon a knowledge of the classics, while a knowledge of certain branches of science is considered to be of little or no account.

If the young man who wishes to become an officer chooses to take up Latin and Greek, let him. To compel him to do so, if his strength lies in other directions, is an absurdity worthy of the Land of Topsey-turveydom. If you say that, under modern conditions, in the army you want the best intellect, and only that, well and good; by all means get it. Only remember two things. No system of competitive examination that was ever conceived is, or can be, a test of intellect. The man who comes out at the top of the list is not the most intellectual; he is the model pupil of the model crammer, and the master of the best system of mnemonics. Competitive examinations mean, and must mean, cramming; and the art of cramming is a trick, a knack, it has nothing to do with intellect. And, in the second place, superiority in any one branch of study does not necessarily mean intellectual pre-eminence, whether that branch of study be Greek or trigonometry. He who supposes that it does, must either have a very limited experience of men and of affairs, or he must be hide-bound in the traditions of red tape.

If to ensure having good officers we must have competitive examinations, let us spread out our boundaries as wide as we can. Do not let us confine them within the narrowest possible limits. Do not let us say: if you cannot keep five glass balls going in the air at once, you are of no use to us. Let us also consider the man who can drive a sword well home. Let us net all the fish that are worth the netting. Probably at every examination which takes place, some of the men who would serve us best are being sent away. Considering the great cloud of the things which a man could and, if you like, should know, we may lay it down as

a truism that a knowledge of the Latin grammar and of the Greek accents is not an indispensable part of the equipment of a successful officer.

Englishmen on certain points are difficult to move. They like to cherish the belief that all things are going well. Oddly enough they hate to be bothered about the army. The average Englishman is apt to think that there is something occult and beyond his ken in the art of war. Possibly England as a nation will not awake to the absurdity of the system of competitive examination for entrance to the army, as that system is at present conducted, until we are once more face to face with a great national crisis. The Crimean War induced us to a certain extent to set our house in order. It is just possible that another Crimean War will be needed before we can be persuaded to do away with compulsory Latin and Greek.

The classical bogey has been a nightmare to long generations of Englishmen. It is a striking exemplification of the deep-rooted conservatism which is our chief national characteristic, that such a bogey should still be allowed to survive in our army, that our soldiers should still be constrained to wrestle with the nightmare before they can be permitted to fight our battles for us. One may be excused for entertaining a pious hope that, ere long, our rulers will wake from their slumbers, and in what will indeed be the fulness of time, the nightmare will vanish away.

BLIND LARRY.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

WHEN I was a boy, no wake or wedding, no fair or pattern dance, was complete without old Larry and his fiddle. Indeed, if he were seen in his frieze tail-coat, and the tall felt hat he bought at Casey's the year of the big snow, unless it were a Holy Day, people asked "Who's wakin'?" or "Who's gittin' married?" And so it was that there were few sights so familiar in Gurteen as old Larry, with the left tail of his coat cocked up at an impossible angle by the fiddle it sheltered, guiding his hesitating steps through the village with his poor, groping hand on his son's shoulder. For old Larry was blind. "The good God give me a pair av' eyes," he would say, "but divil a blink can I see out av' aythor av' thim, glory be to Him. Deed I wouldn't know I had them at all, ony to put me finger in thim." But he was, at least as I remember him first, quite contented with his lot, and life was full of interest for him. Not that he had many interests; no, not that. He had only one, and that was his son. But every thought, every hope and fear that dwelt in the busy solitude of the blind man's brain centred in the barefooted, ragged urchin whom he never saw, and never could see. I used to think it was all the better that he could not see him, for "The Gossoon," as his father always called him, was not lovely. He had very blue eyes, it is true, that looked all the more blue for being backed by black lashes and hair; and broad, white teeth that quite filled a very large mouth; but the general expression was not such that, to put it leniently, invited unlimited confidence. Besides, I always hated broad, snub noses. I know the one thing old Larry found hardest to bear was that he could not see the Gossoon. I have seen him listen to his voice, no matter to whom he was speaking, with an eager attention that made him hold his breath; and when his hand rested on the boy's ragged shoulder, his long, thin fingers would move softly from time to time half-searching, half-caressing. People said the Gossoon was good to his father, and it seemed so indeed. Every morning on his way to school, he would lead the old man to the corner of the narrow boreen that led up to the chapel gate, and leave him there to pass the day on a deformed three-legged stool, playing to chance passers-by, and praying for the soul that threw him a halfpenny. At midday the Gossoon would appear again with both their dinners wrapped in a red handkerchief, and a fire-blackened can he called the "tinny" of sour milk. The handkerchief was spread on old Larry's knees, and the Gossoon handed the tinny when his father said, "Show me the milk, Larry, boy." When that was over he hurried away to be in time for a game of "tip-cat" or "hunt-the-fox" before afternoon school. When he was set free he would take his father and the maimed-looking stool home—unless it were summer, and then the handkerchief and tinny appeared once more. So it seemed just that the Gossoon should enjoy the good opinion of us all and an extra smile from Father Murphy when he met him, and I joined in the verdict until that snowy evening I can still recall so well.

I was hurrying homewards with a freez-

ing gun on my arm, and the darkness was creeping swiftly in over the grey sea, when I passed Larry sitting at his usual post, shivering in the stinging wind. He was huddling his precious fiddle under his old, threadbare coat; and had crossed his arms on his breast that his trembling hands might get some warmth. I thought there was a weary tone in his voice as he answered my greeting with his usual "Good evenin', kindly, yer honour," and I passed, wondering why he still stayed. A minute after I came upon the Gossoon enthusiastically sliding on a pond with a crowd of village boys. He was performing what he called a "duck skeet," to the great admiration of the rest, which consists in sliding in an almost sitting position, and is supposed to represent very adequately a duck that has alighted on a sheet of ice instead of water. Then I made a mistake. Burning with indignation, I went back to where old Larry sat, and as I drew near I thought the spare figure leant forward eagerly to listen; but when I stood by him I saw only the expression of wistful patience I knew so well on his poor, pinched face.

"Your son must be delayed," I said, priding myself on my delicacy; "let me guide you home."

"No, no," he said; "he'll be here in a minute, sure. He won't forget his owld father at all. 'Tis getherin' a handful av sticks he is to bile the supper. God bless him! Thank ye kindly, all the same," he added hastily. But I saw I had hurt him by my offer.

I waited about that night to make sure the Gossoon did come; and, though he soon put in his appearance, from thenceforth I never joined in his praise. But his father never doubted him. He would tell me often of the comfort the boy was and how great his unselfishness in everything. "Sure 'tis he's the good chilt to me," he would say, with tears of thankful joy in his great grey eyes. "'Tis the blissid saints of hiven giv' him! Divil a step can I pick me way on'y for him. But I'll not keep him be me always, it wouldn't be right, God forgive me! Phelim O'Connor, above at the school, tells me he have a great element for book learning, and 'tis in the fourth book he is already. America's the spot for the likes av him, that's handy with head, an' 'tis there I'll send him shortly, with the help av God."

And to do this—to get and save enough to buy an outfit and pay the passage—old Larry begged the day long at his corner, and trudged many a weary mile to bring music to the dance. Clothed wretchedly in an old tail-coat that was green with age; his corduroy breeches gaping at the knees where once the trim white bone buttons were, and where, still, coarse yarn hung in tags; his tattered grey stockings clumsily patched with bits of cloth and flannel; he would sit by the wayside begging. He knew every one in the village by the sound of their footsteps, and took a gentle pride in greeting us by name before we spoke, so that we might know it. But, in spite of his poor old clothes, there was something attractive in his appearance; for he had the well-cut aquiline features that are not uncommon in the Irish peasantry, and his long white hair gave him a look that was altogether venerable; while the wistful patience in his wide-open grey eyes, that seemed ever to rest on something beautiful in the far distance, lent a strange charm to his pale, worn face. For Larry had been an old man even when he married. His wife had died to give life to the boy he lived for now; but all that is another story.

Time passed on its way, bringing no change to old Larry and the boy, except that the latter grew taller, and sharper-looking, and less to my liking, every day. Yet his father seemed more wrapped up in him than ever, and starved himself to keep him well clothed and fed, tramped further and further afield with his fiddle under his frieze tail-coat. Each day, wet or fine, saw him at his post, and the lilt of his reels followed you down the road until it was lost on the wind that blows in from the sea. He never begged from footsteps he knew, though he often had a coin even from those who passed him every day, for every one had a kindly pity for the "poor dark man." And in all that time, though he knew that the moment was drawing ever nearer when the one ray of light in his life would be taken—when the Gossoon would have to go, and he would be left quite alone in the dark, he never complained or even thought hardly of his lot. He was always as ready as ever to thank "the love av God an' the howly saints" for the blessings he had in his son and in his music.

"Sure, how can I be lonely settin' here?" he said, once in answer to me. "Won't the Gossoon carry me home at sundown, an' until then haven't I me fiddle? Deed, whin the good God put blind eyes in me, He giv' me the divil's own pair av ears, glory be to Him; an' though I can't see to walk the roads, I know ivery step av the

way up an' down the three strings; but 'tis wid me ears I sees the way there."

At last the time for the parting came. For a week before the day he was to sail, the Gossoon sat with his father at the old corner, and the old man would stretch out his hand from time to time to feel his son by him. All the village came to visit them there at some time or other in those last days, and every one tried his best to make it easier for Larry. But he hardly showed that he knew when any one came to talk with him; and it was the Gossoon, who thoroughly enjoyed his popularity as the centre of attraction, that answered the condolences, bragging of the great things he would do "across the wather," and of the style he would keep when he came back "rollin' in money." And this was the only thing that pleased old Larry. He would listen intently when the Gossoon spoke, and a faint light of pride and pleasure would steal over his sad face. He never touched his fiddle all that week, as far as we heard; but the Gossoon told me that he played in the night softly to himself, and that the tune was no tune at all, and all he could think it was like was the keening at Peter Hiney's burying, when he was drowned in the winter, and all the women from Scartnamuck, up in the hills, followed the corpse home.

I saw them start, the day the Gossoon went. They drove in Con Deasey's cart into Dunmanway, and it was so long a way that they started the day before. The Gossoon was in a full rig-out of new clothes, and sat jauntily on the feather bed that was tied to his trunk by stout hay-rope. He waved his new hat to me as he passed with a condescending flourish, and bid me good-bye with an intonation quite new to him, but which I recognised as a fair imitation of one Daly, who had returned from America a month or so ago, bringing with him the genuine Yankee twang; which the Gossoon had studied and produced, with marked effect, in the farewells he shouted to the neighbours. I should have laughed aloud as he fired it off magnificently at me, with a new clay pipe—he never smoked before—in his mouth, had I not been close enough to see old Larry's face as he sat in the front of the cart, turned half-back to rest his hand on one of the Gossoon's brogues in the straw by him, the only part of his son he could reach. His usually wan face was dead white; and his lips were tightly compressed as if in a stern resolve that the cruel grief, the awful sense of coming loneliness, must not make him shrink from the trial at the last moment. He was doing what he knew was best for his son, but it meant a greater wrench, a deeper agony to him than to another. Shut up in the dark as he was, he had only one thing in life he cared for, only one thing he lived for, and that was his son. For years the boy had been everything to him, and for years he had toiled unceasingly for the boy. Now he was going, of his own free will, to set thousands of miles between them, and create for himself a desolate world. I think he never really made up his mind to do it until the last minute, for Con Deasey told me that it was only when the train had begun to move away from the platform at Dunmanway that he drew the money he had saved from his bosom, and held it out towards the Gossoon with a groan that was half a prayer, and that, no sooner had it left his hand, than he groped wildly to snatch it back again. But it was too late; the train had moved on, and the Gossoon was on his way to America.

Larry was not at his post the day after, nor for many a day after that, and it was said in the village that he must be half lonesome without the Gossoon; a mild way of putting it, no doubt, but that was not from any want of sympathy; it was more from an unspoken feeling of delicacy that made his grief something too sacred to be casually discussed. He was left alone all the next week in his little cabin on the hill that faced Terrence Flannigan's farm, and grew a thriving crop of oats on its old sodden thatch with the seeds the west wind blew there. Little Peggy, brother's daughter to Judy Bralligan at the corner shop, boiled the kettle for him and "reddened up" the house, and Judy herself hobbled up once or twice in the day to see it done. I met her coming back on the Saturday night, and I hardly knew her, there was such a gentle look on her cross, wizened old face. The corner of the boreen looked strangely empty without the poor crouching figure that we all knew so well, and the children gave up playing there when they found it deserted day after day, and quarrelled with each other in the dusty streets instead.

I went up to see the old man after a while, and found him sitting alone by his empty fireplace, holding something that I saw was an old coat of the Gossoon's in his hands, feeling it with his long nervous fingers and stroking it gently to and fro. There was a world of sadness in his grey eyes, that were set in a face of ivory white, and, it may

have been only imagination, but his long hair seemed more silvered than when I had seen him three weeks before. So absorbed was he in caressing the poor rags that lay in his lap, that his keen ear did not notice my entrance, and it was only when I spoke that he hastily tried to conceal the coat. There was something very piteous in the way he turned to speak, holding it, as he thought, hidden behind him; but I couldn't help seeing it, though I felt a brute for doing so. We talked of the crops, and the weather, and Flannigan's pigs, each avoiding any mention of the Gossoon, but I could see he meant to turn our conversation casually in that direction, and at last he did, by asking me how long it took to get to America. I told him it would take six or eight days—not much more. Then he wanted to know how long it took to come back, and looked surprised when I told him it would take the same time.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well," he answered slowly, "they tells me 'tis down a ship goes an' she sailin' out, till on'y the masts av her is to be seen, an' then thim goes too; an' if she have the fall av the hill wid her goin', won't she have it agin her comin' back?" I tried to explain the thing to him, but with such little success that he clung all the more tenaciously to his theory, and I found myself wondering if he weren't right. That was before I went to school in Bandon. "Which direction is he from me now?" he asked presently, carefully avoiding his son's name. I told him if he sat facing the door, that opened westward, he would be looking towards America. "Ay, looking, but not seein'. God help us!" he murmured, and I wished I had bitten my tongue out before I had spoken so thoughtlessly, while he sat motionless with his white face turned to the open door, and his piteous eyes looking as if they rested on some far-distant object. I never shall forget that picture of desolation. The sordid room we sat in, with its smoke-blackened walls all bare except for a cheap coloured print of the Virgin pointing to her heart, which was shown gashed and bleeding, and a print torn from some Fenian paper, where Ireland was a woman weeping in chains; and the tottering old settle on which we sat by the fireplace, where the "bastable," the iron pot that boils and bakes for all the country, was the only furniture to be seen — unless you count a huge log that, set on end, was the table, and Larry's three-legged stool in a corner.

I fell to wondering how he lived there at all, until he asked me hesitatingly if I would lead him to the cliff and set him facing the land that held his son. "'Tis a foolish fancy, sor," he added apologetically, as we rose to go. And I led him to the green cliff-top that was but a stone's throw across the road outside, and set him there, gazing with a world of sorrow in the eyes that saw nothing out across the lazy Atlantic that whispered a drowsy day-dream in our ears. He bade me leave him there, and when I hesitated, asked me to tell little Peggy to come for him at sundown. So I went, and left the solitary figure standing clear against the sky, his grey hair tossing gently in the west wind as he bent his head forward as one who watched. After that little Peggy would lead him there every day, carrying the old stool by its longest leg, and he would sit facing the west for hours together, sometimes playing a little on his fiddle, which made the children seek him out again; but they soon forsook him, because they couldn't dance to such sad music as he made, all except little Katie Meehan, who was born a cripple; she would stay by him and pick wild flowers to give him before she went. So the old man grew sadder and more silent day by day, till people tried to persuade him to take up his old pursuit, and bring his fiddle to the fairs and weddings; but with no success until Judy Bralligan asked Father Murphy to try, and the big, soft-hearted priest talked him into it one Sunday after first mass. Our good Catholics very rarely oppose their clergymen, and old Larry promised to go to the wedding of Con Deasey's Ellen, who was to marry a baker from Dunmanway on the next Tuesday.

I had full particulars from many sources of what happened that night. The wedding-party assembled in the kitchen, when the candles were lit, to dance to Larry's fiddle, and many a kindly greeting the old man got as he was led to the top of the room. There was nothing but merry-making around him as he took his place silently and twanged his strings into tune, and there was a loud call for "The Wind that Shakes the Corn" — for Patsey O'Rourke was there whose pride was to set the bacon that hung from the low ceiling all swinging with his feet as he trod that measure. Larry struck up the jig at a pace that soon had all the "floor" breath-

less, but none showed the white feather by crying for slower time—you can hardly fall lower than that in the west. However, it grew slower after a while, and then slower, and if they hadn't the intoxication of dancing on them they would have known that the tune was changed. Some did at length, and stood out to listen, and then more stopped, until Patsey O'Rourke had the floor to himself; and then he stopped too. But no word was spoken. Every one stood listening and watching the player as he rocked slowly to and fro in time to the wild "Lament" that screamed beneath his quivering bow. His eyes looked straight in front of him with all their sadness intensified a hundredfold, and he played on, altogether unconscious of time or place, a wild theme of aching, desolate sorrow that surged and sank under his trembling fingers. There was a dead silence until a woman sobbed, and then Con Deasey cleared his throat manfully, and laid his hand on the old man's arm. He started as if from a dream, and pausing to collect his wandering thoughts, plunged into the jig again; but it only lasted for a few bars; it lost time, stumbled, and stopped.

"'Tis no good for me to thry, Con," said the old man humbly; "take me home out av this."

And then they danced to James Hiney, who volunteered to "jig wid his mouth."

That was old Larry's last appearance in public. Nothing could persuade him to make the attempt again, and we soon gave up trying. After the failure to take up his old profession, his figure might have been seen any day on the cliff-top, and sometimes far into the night too. After a while, when he realised that he was living on charity, he took to plaiting creels with slender osier shoots, as he had learned to do before he knew the gift of music that dwelt in him; and many a creel and "kitch" to carry turf and potatoes he made for the farmers, who only sought an excuse for giving him money and food. As for his fiddle, it was rarely heard, and then it was by a belated wayfarer who paused for a moment to listen outside the cabin window, where never a light shone, and who hurried away from such sad strains, muttering a prayer to Our Lady for the blind man in his loneliness.

On Wednesday, the 14th inst.,

WILL BE PUBLISHED

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 307.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XX.

THE furniture and appointments that constituted the claim of the room to the title of "furnished sitting-room" were all good of their kind, and in that inoffensive, if uninteresting, taste which has superseded in such apartments—in desirable neighbourhoods at least—the glaring hideousness of thirty years ago.

The room had, however, presumably been occupied by its present owner for some length of time, and the sign manual of that occupant's tastes and pursuits had subdued its original character into a mere background.

A great writing-table with pigeonholed back, and drawers wherever drawers might be—a feature certainly never introduced by the original furnisher—was the most conspicuous object in the room. Ponderous-looking books seemed to fill every corner; on a table in one of the windows stood a large, brass-mounted microscope, and near the fireplace was an eminently practical-looking arm-chair. Stuck in the looking-glass over the chimney-piece were sundry cards of invitation.

The clock on the mantelshelf pointed to ten minutes to three. It was a mild April day, one of the windows was open, and the soft spring-scented air stirred gently about the figure of the solitary occupant of the room, as he leaned back in the arm-chair before mentioned and finished a late luncheon with a cigarette. It was North Branston.

It was an older-looking man, and a harder-looking man than the North Branston who had left Alnchester two years before. The dark face had gained noticeably in power; the lines of thought were more deeply graven on his forehead; the deep-set eyes were keener and more penetrating. But the lines of thought were not the only lines with which time had dealt somewhat heavily. The old air of grim, passive endurance seemed to have slipped away, pressed out by the wear and work of daily life before an indescribable settling of the whole face. The contemptuous cynicism about his mouth, the coldness of his whole expression, no longer conveyed any suggestion of serving a defensive purpose; they had developed uncompromisingly; and nowhere in the face was there any trace of those pleasanter developements which should have softened and restrained them.

It was a less disagreeable face, inasmuch as its bitterness was less aggressive, more reserved and overlaid; but it was a more disagreeable face, inasmuch as the possibilities which it contained were fewer.

He finished his cigarette slowly, his brows drawn together in an expression of thought which was rather that of a man whose habit it is to think deeply than of a man personally interested in his subject. Then he rose, glanced at the luncheon tray, and laid his hand on the bell. Before he had rung it, however, a short, assured rap fell on the door, and it opened quickly. It admitted a tall man, of presumably about five-and-fifty, with iron-grey hair, and well-cut features, keen and rather unsympathetic in expression. He wore the professional frock-coat, and there was that about him which marks the man who is "somebody" in his own line.

He greeted North Branston with a friendly nod.

"Thought I should find you, Branston," he said. "I wanted to see you about that case in the accident ward. I've just been in to have a look at it."

"I would have waited if I had expected you," returned North.

"No consequence! It doesn't need me. From what Phillips tells me, you've made an excellent thing of it."

There was a cordial approval in the speaker's voice, and a certain respect dominated the latent patronage of his manner.

But North received the approbation without the slightest sign of satisfaction.

"I think we shall save it," he said.

"And it's a very remarkable case," pursued the other man; "so I thought I'd look in as I was passing, and give you a suggestion that occurred to me. Look here, have you thought of this?"

A brief technical colloquy ensued, and then the elder man turned to depart.

"All right," he said. "It's a point I had not considered. It's an interesting experiment at any rate; we may as well try it. By-the-bye," he stopped with his hand on the door. "They've offered you the lectureship, I hear."

"Yes."

"Good! I congratulate you! See you to-night?"

"Yes."

The elder man nodded approvingly and departed.

Left to himself, North Branston carried out his previous intention of ringing the bell, and then he sat down before his writing-table. He drew a letter out of an envelope, glanced through its contents, and wrote and directed a brief note.

Fortune, during the past two years, had been conspicuously kind to North Branston. The appointment with which he had come to London had been resigned by him, in six months, in favour of a post in connection with the same hospital of a far more responsible and important nature. His recent visitor was Dr. Slade-Fenton, one of the best known medical men of the day, who combined with a large "society" practice an all-important position in connection with the hospital to which North was attached. Dr. Slade-Fenton was Archdeacon French's brother-in-law. He had known something of North Branston in his earlier days, and on his reappearance in London he had quickly detected and appraised his more mature powers. He had found the younger man useful, and he had extended towards him that somewhat pushing patronage without the help of which even such abilities as North's may sometimes remain long unappreciated by the world at large. It was said in a good many quarters that a share in Dr. Slade-Fenton's practice, which would amount to a practical partnership, was open to North Branston if he should choose to accept it. Dr. Slade-Fenton was, indeed, very desirous that he should accept it; but, at present, private practice seemed to offer no attractions to North. And such time as was left him by his duties at the hospital he occupied with the literary and scientific sides of his profession. The letter which he had just written was an acceptance of an important lectureship which had never before been offered to so young a man. North Branston, at thirty-three, was on the high-road to a position of singular prominence in his profession.

There was no suggestion of elation about him, however, as he stamped his envelope and put it on one side for the post. Nor did his expression change at all, as will the expression of a man interrupted in a train of personally interesting thought, when the door was again opened by the servant. He turned his head mechanically.

"I beg pardon, sir," said the woman, "there's a gentleman downstairs. I told him that I thought you were busy, sir, but he says he's quite sure you will see him. Mr. Bryan Armitage, he told me to say."

The woman's manner witnessed to the fact that North Branston was by no means patient of interruption by visitors. He glanced at the clock as she finished speaking, and then said tersely:

"Ask him to come up."

The woman disappeared, and a minute or two later, Bryan Armitage entered the room. He came eagerly towards North with outstretched hand.

"How are you, North?" he exclaimed. "It is luck to find you in. You don't seem to encourage visitors, though! I was received as though I were no end of a phenomenon. How are you? I say, what an age it is since we met, and how glad I am to see you!"

He was shaking North's hand by this time with a grip that seemed loth to loosen itself; but North Branston rather allowed than returned the enthusiastic hand-shake as he said, with no quickening or warming of his deep, cold tones:

"How are you, Armitage? What are you doing in town? Sit down."

Bryan, tacitly accepting the invitation, glanced at him with a touch of half-disappointed surprise in his eyes.

"Oh, you haven't heard, then?" he said. "I thought they might perhaps have mentioned it in your Alnchester letters. I am transferred. My uncle has got me into one of the big London firms, and they are sending me abroad."

"That means promotion, I suppose," said North.

Bryan Armitage made a rather hurried gesture of negation.

"Not particularly," he said. "I—I wanted a change."

He went on in a lighter tone, and as though passing to a subject more likely to be interesting to his interlocutor:

"I called on Mrs. Vallotson to say good-bye a day or two before I came away, but I expect you've heard since then and your news is later than mine. I hope they're all well."

North Branston had seated himself in his writing-table chair, and he now leaned back, crossing his legs and folding his arms as he said impassively:

"I hear from Alnchester very occasionally. They were all right, I suppose, when you came away?"

For the first time something in North Branston's voice and manner seemed to arrest Bryan Armitage's attention. He looked for a moment rather dubiously at North. And in the pause, and in the half-perplexed, half-attentive expression which crossed his face, certain changes which the past year had wrought upon his boyishness became for the moment strikingly apparent. Bryan Armitage seemed to have grown far more than two years older. The old buoyancy of his spirits seemed to have left him; his voice, in spite of the boyish phrases that still appeared here and there in his talk, had a graver and more manly ring. The twinkle and sparkle of irrepressible humour still lurked in his eyes, but it seemed to be temporarily overlaid with a certain wistful sadness.

"Oh, yes," he said rather slowly. "They—Mrs. Vallotson was quite well. Everybody says she's looking wonderfully well, and Dr. Vallotson, too."

"And Constance?" North shot a glance at his visitor, half amused, half contemplative in its mingling of recollection and penetration. "You've got over that little disappointment by this time, I hope, Armitage?"

Bryan coloured a deep, painful red.

"I'm not that sort, North," he said hurriedly. "It wasn't that kind of affair with me. But Constance is not at home just now. Didn't you know that?"

North shook his head indifferently, and Bryan went on with a kind of hesitating confidence:

"She's been away since Christmas, staying with some people in the country. I'm awfully sorry to say there was a row, though I did my best. And Mrs. Vallotson thought——well, she was rather sent away, don't you see?"

He spoke in a low, pained voice, not looking at North; and he did not see the slight smile with which the latter regarded him.

"A row?" he observed. "What about?"

"Oh, Connie had plans, you know. We won't trot them out, I think."

A vague sense of the total want of sympathy in the tone of the question seemed to be influencing Bryan as he glanced, half defiantly, half wistfully, at North.

"She wanted to stir things up a bit in Alnchester, and I couldn't hold her in. Of course I gave myself away a bit over what happened before you left, or I might have managed better. And—well, Mrs. Vallotson didn't quite see her plans, and Connie didn't see giving them up. That was all."

"Ah!"

North Branston did not smile as he uttered this laconic comment. His face was dark and sardonic. Then he seemed to return to the consideration of his visitor's affairs.

"You've not had a particularly pleasant winter, then, I conclude?"

A quick, short sigh came from Bryan, contrasting oddly, as did his tone, with the boyish frankness of his words:

"I've had a brute of a time," he said. "It wouldn't matter if it were not such a girl as Connie; but to see her spoiling herself with cranks, and not to be able to make her see that they are cranks, put it which way you will—is—is simply beastly, don't you know."

"So you've come away to avoid the spectacle?"

The careless amusement of North's tone seemed to penetrate straight through Bryan's simple confidence. He paused a moment and looked his host straight in the face.

"I've come away because I couldn't do any good," he said. "I believe I only make things worse, and I don't hold with moping and dawdling because one can't get what one wants."

The words implied a good deal more than was actually said, and perhaps the speaker thought that they implied even more than they did; for he coloured, having uttered them, and subsided into silence.

North received the speech with absolute placidity, and the conversation being thus thrown into his hands, seemed to have hardly sufficient impetus in himself either to pursue the original topic or to point a new one. Eventually he said, apparently simply for the sake of saying something:

"You said you were going abroad, didn't you? When and where?"

With a promptitude that showed his readiness to respond to any sign of interest on North's part, Bryan roused himself.

"To Constantinople," he said, "I shall be off next week, I expect. I should have looked you up before this if I hadn't been tied pretty closely at the bank. I've been looking forward to it awfully. One of the things I've principally thought of in coming to London, is seeing something of you, North, after these two years."

He stopped, and then continued with a rather forced cheeriness:

"London's an uncommonly dreary place somehow, when you don't know any one—even when you're hard at work. You never went through that, of course; you had heaps of friends when you came up."

He spoke a little wistfully, and then, North receiving his words in silence—which did not tend to promote conversation—he rose. There was an air of disappointment about him.

"You're busy, I expect," he said hesitatingly; he seemed to be struggling valiantly against a consciousness which he would not recognise. "Perhaps I'd better be off. I—I rather thought that you might have been able to come out for a walk. Never mind, I must go alone."

There was a cheery holding at bay of the rather dreary prospect that evidently unfolded itself before him, which seemed to influence North almost in spite of himself.

"What are you doing this evening?" he said carelessly, as he, too, rose.

The visitor stared.

"Doing? Oh, smoking and reading a bit, I suppose," he returned, in a voice that was evidently determined not to be rueful.

"You don't seem to look forward to it."

"Well, not particularly, perhaps," with a laugh; "it gets a trifle dull."

"I could take you to an affair that would be a good deal duller if you like—a party at the Slade-Fentons'. Mrs. Slade-Fenton is a sister of Archdeacon French's, at Alnchester, you know. It's a fashionable, intellectual affair, but it might amuse you."

There was a word of contempt for the affair in question in North Branston's tone, but Bryan Armitage did not notice it. The cloud had cleared from his face as if by magic, and his honest blue eyes were full of gratitude and enthusiasm.

"I should like it no end," he said. "I say, North, it is good of you. Wouldn't it bore you, though? It would be capital fun."

"I assure you it won't," said North. "But if you like to be here at nine o'clock, you can prove the fact for yourself. It's an early affair."

Bryan Armitage was not afflicted either with shyness or self-consciousness in any form. He was an eminently sociable soul, and when he reappeared at North's room at nine o'clock that evening, punctual to the moment, he was in high spirits; in spirits so high, indeed, and so permeated with warm-hearted cordiality, as to suggest an even violent reaction from the constraint of the morning.

"They're awful swells, aren't they—the Slade-Fentons?" he said, as their hansom turned into the street—in a most fashionable locality—in which the Slade-Fentons lived.

"They go in for society—yes," replied North tersely.

"Will there be a lot of people there to-night?"

North smiled rather grimly.

"Not what Mrs. Slade-Fenton would call a lot of people," he said. "It's the fashion to be 'cultured' just at present. Mrs. Slade-Fenton is going in for a series of debating evenings—topics of the day. This is one of them. I told you it would be dull."

The bald explanation was received with a moment's puzzled silence. Then Bryan said in a tone of keen curiosity:

"It will be no end new, whatever it may be besides. I say, here we are!"

The cab had stopped, and a few minutes later Bryan found himself following North, up the staircase of such a house as his unsophisticated eyes had never beheld, into the presence of his hostess.

Mrs. Slade-Fenton was not a tall woman, but she was amply and firmly developed, and carried herself with an air of self-conscious distinction. Her features were plain, but they were cleverly re-

deemed from insignificance by the abundance of red hair, which she wore turned back from her forehead. This eminently becoming hair, taken in conjunction with her well-preserved face, made her look far less than forty-five years. And combined with the rich and brilliant style of dress which she affected, it had procured her a reputation as a "fine-looking woman."

Mrs. Slade-Fenton was a woman belonging to a large class troubled with no inconveniently high perceptions, but gifted with considerable shrewdness and a keen eye for the main chance. The main chance, with Mrs. Slade-Fenton, was represented by that social prestige, that keeping of themselves well before their world, which she and her husband, in a practical, up-to-date fashion, recognised as being necessary to Dr. Slade-Fenton's professional well-being. And she had cultivated a position in society with ever-increasing resource and success for nearly fifteen years. It was a hobby with her to pose as one having a footing, so to speak, in two worlds—the world of fashion and the world of intellect. In the fashionable set to which she belonged, her assumption of intellectual proclivities had gone far towards individualising her. In the intellectual set, the cultivation of which was quite as necessary from a business point of view, the position which the Slade-Fentons held in society conferred upon them an undefined but quite undeniable distinction.

Frivolity having, as the century draws to a close, ceased to hold the fashionable field; and intellectuality of all kinds having become the thing; Mrs. Slade-Fenton, like a thorough woman of business, saw her opportunity and closed with it. The time had come for such a judicious amalgamation of her worlds as would cause a sensation in each. The present occasion represented such an amalgamation, having for its object the discussion of a social question recently started on one of the advanced magazines; and Mrs. Slade-Fenton was in her element.

Bryan Armitage's modest composure was not easily to be upset; but as he made his bow he was distinctly excited and even a little thrilled. The house and all its appointments "made a fellow feel so small," as he afterwards expressed it; he had caught a glimpse in the drawing-rooms beyond of faces known to him only, hitherto, through the pages of the illustrated papers; and his hostess herself, arrayed in deep violet velvet and old lace, and further endued with her most intellectual demeanour, was a presence calculated to inspire a respect not untouched with awe.

He heard North Branston's introduction of him, and the few words of explanation with which it was supplemented; words spoken with the indifferent assurance of a man confident as to his ground; with a rather curious expression stealing over his face. And the gracious reception accorded him deepened that expression.

"I am charmed to see you," said Mrs. Slade-Fenton. "Dr. Branston is quite at home here, and any friend of his is welcome." She turned to North as she finished with a manner which seemed to take possession of him in a matter-of-course fashion. "Let me see," she said. "Will Mr. Armitage care to speak? No?"—as Bryan interposed a hurried disclaimer. "Then we must see that he is established in good company. Olive! Where is Olive? By-the-bye, I hear that it is all right about the lectureship, Dr. Branston. A thousand congratulations."

The words were spoken in an interested, well-satisfied tone, and Bryan glanced at North, wondering as to the subject of congratulation.

"Thanks," said North briefly.

"You'll speak to-night, won't you? Now, you really must. Ah, here is Olive. You must settle it with her."

A tall, dark girl—not handsome but very well and strikingly dressed—was holding out her hand to North with a brilliant smile.

"Congratulations," she said. "Any quantity of them. You'll be in your element as a lecturer, Dr. Branston. I judge by your ever-expressive silence! Seriously, though, every one is delighted."

"Dr. Branston must be made to speak to-night," said Mrs. Slade-Fenton decisively. "It is quite his night. I put him in your charge, Olive. But first I want you to take care of his friend—Mr. Armitage, Miss Kenderdine. Introduce Mr. Armitage to some pleasant people and see that he has a good place."

Miss Kenderdine was evidently not a young woman of dawdling proclivities. She took stock of the individual thus commended to her care; appraised him, presumably, as uninteresting; and then said to him, with a little smile and gesture of temporary farewell to North:

"Suppose we go into the other room, then?"

To say that Bryan Armitage acquitted himself as creditably as he might have done during the ten minutes that followed,

would be wholly untrue. But the previous five minutes had provided him with sundry new ideas, which entirely prevented his rising to the occasion. He was introduced to some half-dozen people as "Dr. Branston's friend," a formula which never failed to act as a passport; and then Miss Kenderdine paused.

"You will do now, I think," she said lightly. "And I must go. You will find this an excellent place."

She turned away with an easy, supercilious little nod; and Bryan Armitage watched her cross the room to where North Branston stood, buttonholed by a distinguished political economist.

Further conversation was not expected of Dr. Branston's friend, but he used his eyes and ears throughout the evening with ever-deepening interest; and he used them to such purpose that when he finally found himself outside the house, and alone with North, he walked the whole length of the street in total silence.

Silence had apparently become North Branston's natural element, and he made no attempt to break it in this instance. It was Bryan who eventually said abruptly:

"Who is Miss Kenderdine?"

"She is a cousin of Slade-Fenton's. She lives with them."

There was another pause.

"Do you—you consider her a good-looking girl, I suppose?"

North Branston glanced round at his companion, a cynical little smile curling his lips.

"Are you smitten, my boy?" he said. "Waste of pains, I assure you!"

The young man flushed to the roots of his hair.

"Smitten!" he cried. "I? And with a girl like that? Why, she's a regular out-and-out society woman! I don't believe there's a bit of—of gentleness or anything of that kind in her!"

A slight laugh came from North, and Bryan Armitage stopped abruptly. The colour left his face as though with the consciousness of having made a dreadful mistake; and for quite a moment he stared blankly before him without making any attempt to speak. Then he faltered:

"I—I beg your pardon, North. I'm the biggest fool alive. I—beg your pardon!"

The cigar which North had lighted paused suddenly in its passage to his lips. Then it proceeded on its way.

"I'm not prepared to argue as to your mental status! But why beg my pardon?"

The words were spoken with the utmost deliberation, and Bryan received them with an awkward laugh.

"I suppose I'm only putting my foot into it worse," he said ruefully. "I suppose it isn't—you don't—— But you see, old fellow, coming in from outside with nothing to do but to look on, I couldn't help seeing how things are."

"How what things are?"

"Why, hang it all, North, you're rather hard on a man—you and Miss Kenderdine, of course." He stopped. "I—I suppose it's as good as settled?" he added tentatively and wistfully.

There was a moment's silence, and then North smiled.

"Yes," he said, "it's quite settled. I'm not a marrying man."

With a start of astonishment, not to be reduced to words, Bryan Armitage looked at his companion as though doubting the evidence of his ears. He looked away, looked back again, murmured vaguely: "I beg your pardon!" and then relapsed into total silence.

They reached the place where their ways parted with that silence unbroken, and again it was Bryan who broke it at last. He came to a standstill, with his eyes fixed on North, a puzzled and distressed expression standing out in them in strong relief.

"North," he said, in an odd, gentle tone, "I'd no idea, until to-night, that you were such a swell. I shan't see you again before I go away, I expect, and I should just like to say this, if you don't mind. I dare say I shouldn't have understood all it meant, but I—I wish you had told me about that lectureship. I—should like to have congratulated you."

As though that tone in Bryan's voice had touched, quite suddenly, something in North Branston of the very existence of which its owner was unconscious, his eyes softened strangely and involuntarily.

"You're quite mistaken," he said quickly. "I did not think of it; that was all."

"You did not think of it!"

There was a moment's pause as North shook his head. Then Bryan, with his face more puzzled than ever, held out his hand impulsively.

"You'll let me say I'm glad with all my heart," he said simply.

North Branston wrung his hand in a sudden, genuine grip.

"Thank you, Bryan, boy," he said.

His tone was hard no longer, but it was penetrated through and through with a deep, unconscious sadness.

OLD-FASHIONED WIT.

Wit changes its fashion as completely as clothes do theirs, but the changes are not so rapid or so frequent. If we glance at a collection of the "good things" of illustrious Greeks and Romans, we shall probably wonder, as Mr. Pickwick did on a memorable occasion, at the ease with which some people were amused. An exception might, perhaps, be made in favour of Themistocles, some of whose good things have quite a modern flavour. His reply to the native of Seriphos might have been made by a distinguished Parisian to an Auvergnat, though perhaps the modern would have put it more neatly. The story is quoted by Cicero in his "De Senectute," and is a proof that the great Roman orator, though he had no claim to be considered a "funny man" himself, could appreciate a neat retort. "When a certain native of the paltry island of Seriphos told Themistocles, in an altercation which arose between them, that he was indebted for the lustre of his fame not to the intrinsic splendour of his actions, but to the country in which he had had the good fortune to be born, 'It may be so,' replied the Athenian general, 'for if I had received my birth at Seriphos, I could have had no opportunity of producing my talents; but give me leave to tell you, that yours would never have made a figure though you had been born in Athens.'"

The answer displays what our ancestors would have termed "a pretty wit," but, as a rule, the witticisms of the ancient Greeks were very poor.

If the history of wit is ever written, considerable prominence would have to be given to the French wits of the eighteenth century. It was not a golden age, an age of brass rather, but brass lacquered to such a surprising degree that it looked like gold. Everybody who aspired to be considered genteel wished to be a wit, and, if he could not say smart things himself, he could at least sit by the couch of the Marquise, and whilst she sipped her chocolate and played with her lap-dog, relate to her the very last good thing which M. de Voltaire or M. Piron had uttered. The authors in that age fairly boiled over with repartee and were never dull—except in their books—but it must be owned that their wit lacked the right ring. There was nothing genial about it. A jest to be successful had to be spiteful or malicious, and every peal of laughter it raised was at the expense of some poor devil, and the more he winced under the satire the better the joke was thought.

In justice to these caustic wits it must be conceded that they were utterly fearless, and dreaded neither the master's sword nor the lackey's cudgel, nor the cells of the Bastille. One wit composed a scathing epigram on a certain feather-bed soldier who had been recently created a Marshal of France.

"He will probably give you a good beating for this," said a friend who perused the production. "I shall be happy to find that he can at all events make some use of his bâton," was the reply. Lenglet-Dufresnoy had paid so many visits to the Bastille that when he saw an "exempt" coming down the street in which he lived, he would call out to his housekeeper: "Pack up half-a-dozen shirts, and don't forget a packet of tobacco." The latter portion of the remark would tend to show that even at that time authors were treated as first-class misdemeanants, and were not debarred from the luxury of a smoke. An influential personage thought no more of asking a Minister for fifty blank "lettres de cachet" than a well-to-do gentleman of the present day would of asking his banker for a cheque-book, and got them quite as easily. If he was troubled with a disobedient son, or pestered by a pertinacious dun, he filled up one of these useful documents, handed it to an "exempt," and the person named was locked up until he promised to marry the young woman his father had looked out for him, or agreed to rule off the account in his ledger. Under such circumstances the wits might have been pardoned if they preferred the profitable "dedication" to the dangerous lampoon. Even Voltaire was put in durance vile in his young days, and it was not his fault that he did not go back to the Bastille directly after he came out. The Regent, who rightly judged that it would be better to have young Voltaire for a friend than for an enemy, sent the Marquis de Nocé to the Bastille with orders to release the young satirist, and bring him straight to the Palais Royal. The order was duly obeyed, and, late in the evening, Voltaire and the Marquis arrived at the Regent's Court. Whilst they were waiting in the antechamber a heavy thunderstorm occurred. There came a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder so deafening that an awed silence reigned amongst the courtiers for a few moments.

It was broken by Voltaire crying out in a loud voice: "Things could not be worse up there if Heaven were governed by a Regent." The Marquis de Nocé repeated this remark to the Duc d'Orleans, and suggested that Voltaire should be sent back to the Bastille, but the Regent only laughed, and promised the young wit a pension.

"I am much obliged to your Highness," said Voltaire, "for giving me the means to procure food, but I beg of you not to trouble yourself in future about my lodgings."

The principal rival and adversary to Voltaire was Piron, and the two rarely met without an interchange of witticisms, which often degenerated into downright Billingsgate. Piron's wit was sometimes of the brutal kind, and not even good at that; as, for instance, his reply when he was asked the address of Abbé Leblanc, who lived close to a blacksmith's forge, "Rue ——, next door to his bootmaker." But he could utter a very good thing sometimes. He said of Marmontel, who had written a book on French Poetry, that he was like Moses, who showed the Promised Land to others but never entered it himself. During one of his temporary fits of devotion the Archbishop of Paris came up to him as he was leaving Notre Dame and said:

"Monsieur Piron, have you read my last Pastoral Letter?"

"No, monseigneur; have you?" was the unexpected reply.

Much may be forgiven him, however, for the way in which he hammered away at the literary fossils who constituted the French Academy. Many were the witticisms penned or uttered by him against that effete body, and most of his remarks are as true now as they were then. When a Frenchman opens his "Temps" and finds eight solid columns of speeches—four of them a panegyric delivered by some newly-elected illustrious nobody on some dead and gone illustrious nobody, and four of them about French literature in general and its latest ornament, the newly-elected member, in particular — he cannot help agreeing with Piron that it would be better that the recipient of the honour should confine himself to saying simply: "Gentlemen, many thanks," to which the President of the Academy should reply: "Il n'y a pas de quoi." Yet there is always in the reader's mind a suspicion that all Piron's quips were due to jealousy, and that if he had been elected to the Academy, he could have been as tedious as his compeers, and have found it in his heart to bestow all his tediousness on his listeners.

Prominent amongst what may be called the second rank of wits were the Crébillons. The elder one has fallen into complete oblivion, though his contemporaries were of opinion that for "grandeur of sentiment" he was only surpassed by Corneille. A similar fate would have befallen the son, but for the fact that his books are supposed to contain a good deal of impropriety if anybody has the patience to find it. The father and son lived together, and were continually bickering. The father was eighty-one when he produced his best work, and it was generally believed that he was assisted by what in literary and legal circles is called a "devil," and in the art world is known as a "ghost." The "ghost" or "devil" was a comparatively unknown writer named Chartreux. A friend who was present at one of these frequent squabbles, thought to turn the conversation into a more pleasant channel by asking old Crébillon which he considered to be his best work.

"I don't know which is the best," said the old man, "but I am perfectly sure that that"—pointing to his son—"is my worst."

"Quite true," retorted the son. "I am the only one that Chartreux had nothing to do with."

It is pleasant to have to record that there was at least one great wit who did not lay the lash of his satire about him indiscriminately, and find his sole delight in touching friends and enemies "on the raw." Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle had quite as good a head as Voltaire, and certainly a much better heart. He was a prolific author, and; besides the volumes of poetical, historical, and scientific writings which he produced; he gave utterance to many good jokes. He had plenty of time in which to say good things, for he lived to a very great age; indeed, on the day of his death he was within five weeks of completing his hundredth year. Being asked when on his death-bed if he were in pain, he replied that there was nothing the matter with him except that he "experienced a difficulty in living." The reason why his life was so long was, he said, that he had made many friends and no enemies, and had always acted up to his two favourite mottoes: "Everything is possible," and "Everybody is right." Perhaps if he had a failing it was to insist too strongly upon the fact that he was the nephew of

Corneille—his mother was the great poet's sister—but his pride was pardonable. On the whole he was one of the most estimable characters of an age in which nobody was particularly virtuous and many people remarkably vicious. It might be said of him as it was of a writer who lived rather later, that "he passed his life in saying good of himself, but he never said harm of others."

Lemierre, the playwright—1733–1793—of whom this was said, was a light-hearted, happy-go-lucky mortal of no great talent as a writer, and was blessed with a young wife who was as pretty as a picture, and as joyous as a bird. She was his good angel, and he said that he used to pass his hand across her shoulders every morning to make sure that her wings had not sprouted. Other names also occur to my mind, but there is not space to speak of them at length now. Among them were Le Sage, the author of that wonderful "Gil Blas," which Macaulay declared he re-read every year of his life; Diderot, who was ever ready to help with money and advice any struggling brother of the pen who came to him; and Saint Foix, whose bluff free speech and Breton obstinacy were always getting him into scrapes.

Perhaps the most curious fact in connection with these dead and gone writers is that many of them owe such shreds of literary renown as they still enjoy to the spontaneous utterances of their wit, and not to what they would have deemed the best efforts of their imagination. Many of them wrote tragedies—dull, cold, heavy productions, every line of which had been polished till what little soul it originally possessed had been rubbed out of it. Such incidents as the dramas could boast were drowned under floods of talk. If the hero wished to stab his wife he stood still with uplifted dagger whilst he poured out a good five hundred rhymed alexandrines, and whilst he rested after this tremendous performance, the lady "got off her chest," as actors call it, a like amount of verse in the shape of an appeal about as passionate and heart-stirring as those heard in the Law Courts when a barrister is showing cause why a mandamus should be issued. These plays have long passed into oblivion, and did not even live till Victor Hugo gave the "coup de grâce" to the school to which they belonged. The names of the authors are in many cases almost forgotten, or are to be found only in literary manuals, or in the compilations of the erudite M. Fournier, and the industrious M. Louis Loire. But it may sometimes happen to the literary student to enter a quiet, out-of-the-way Paris church, and in one of the side chapels to find a fresh wreath of immortelles placed upon a tomb or reared against a tablet. If he can manage, by the aid of what little light falls through the dusty stained-glass window, or comes from the dimly-burning little votive candles, slowly guttering away on their iron spikes, to decipher the inscription, he may, perhaps, read on the tomb or tablet the name of one who, a century and a half ago, was wont to set the table in a roar, and whose opinion on poetry and other cognate subjects was listened to with respect even by the Most Christian King; but who, to-day, is forgotten by all save the remote descendant who placed the wreath upon the tomb, and a few scholars, who, in poring over the old books in a big library, have lighted upon some old book of Ana which recorded the sayings of the old-fashioned wits.

LIBERTY AND LICENSE.

It may, perhaps, be considered rather late in the day to discuss the recent crusade of the goody-goody brigade against the music-halls; but the members of the London County Council will have to seek re-election next March, and it would be a thousand pities if the constituencies were allowed to forget, in the meanwhile, what took place when the managers of the Empire Theatre of Varieties applied for their music and dancing license last month.

A good deal of rather hysterical writing and speech-making was unfortunately indulged in after the decision of the Theatres and Music-Halls Committee of the County Council and before the meeting of the Council itself; and the somewhat intemperate zeal of the more strenuous advocates of freedom and common-sense had the inevitable result of seriously obscuring the main point at issue. Personal abuse of the leaders of the attack on the Empire could not by any possibility prove anything, and undoubtedly led a good many people to sympathise with Mrs. Ormiston Chant and her egregious allies, who would otherwise have taken a more reasonable view of the extraordinary revolution which the general adoption of their views must inevitably bring about in the amusements of the people. For it is nothing less than a revolution that these people want. Mrs. Chant told an interviewer, after the fateful twenty-sixth of October, that she had this year left the

Alhambra alone because she felt that the Empire was as much as she could manage at one time; but that she proposed to deal with all the other music-halls in turn.

Now, it is quite fair to believe that the lady is perfectly single-minded and honest as to the faith that is in her in regard to these matters, and at the same time to take every means to prevent her carrying her mistaken and narrow views into effect. Mrs. Chant may not—and I believe does not—deserve the accusations of self-righteousness and Phariseeism, not to mention worse things, which have been hurled indiscriminately at her. She may be an excellent lady with the best possible intentions; but public opinion, I think, will effectually prevent her having any serious or lasting influence over the public amusements. Her attack was carefully and cleverly planned in secret, and sprung upon the public at the very last minute. Such tactics frequently result in a temporary success, but very rarely indeed "come off" a second time.

The one point in the business on which the people of London ought for their own sakes to concentrate their attention, is the behaviour of the majority of the members of the County Council in this matter, and the irrefutable evidence which they have themselves given of their absolute unfitness to be entrusted with any functions of a judicial character. As a sort of glorified vestry they may have their uses, although even in that capacity they have won but little popularity or respect; as a debating society they are occasionally amusing; but as a judicial body, bound to decide important questions on the evidence that may be laid before them, they are not only ridiculous but, to put it in plain English, absolutely scandalous and disgraceful.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this argument to follow Mrs. Chant's demands as to the conduct of the music-halls to their logical end. The whole question of the regulation of places of popular amusements and of the amount of liberty which is to be enjoyed by persons, even of immoral life, so long as they behave themselves properly and conform to the rules laid down for the general comfort and convenience, is too large a one to be discussed here at the present time; too large a one to be materially affected by a catch vote of such a body as the London County Council. The public in this matter, as it is to be hoped in many others, will be too strong for the Council in the long run, and the Councillors are not at all unlikely to find themselves before long the objects of that reforming zeal of which there is so much going about just at present. Let us by all means progress a little, at all events, in that direction when the Ides of March give us the opportunity. Let us, if we can, give Mrs. Chant another audience to address when she tackles the Alhambra, the Palace, or the Pavilion next year.

Meantime it may be well, without excitement or exaggeration, briefly to consider exactly what took place the other day in connection with the Empire Theatre.

For several years the proprietors of the Empire had enjoyed the license which they had held up to last month; the promenade, against which so much has been said, had been constructed in obedience to the requirements of the Council; the drinking arrangements stood on exactly the same footing. The place was thoroughly well managed, both as regarded the stage and the auditorium; the arrangements for the repression and regulation of the undesirable class of visitors whom it is absolutely impossible to keep out of any place of public assembly, from fashionable churches downwards, were recognised as being as good as they could possibly be. The inspectors—whom the County Council pays to keep a sharp look out over the music-halls, and who are not at all likely to take as their motto, "surtout point de zèle"—had no complaints to make against the entertainments before or behind the curtain. The public had as little to say as the inspectors. The public were equally well satisfied. Everything that skill could devise or the lavish expenditure of capital carry out, was done for them, and the Empire Theatre of Varieties had arrived at the fortunate position of being one of the most successful and popular places of public entertainment ever known in London.

Nothing could have seemed more secure than all this. The shareholders must have thought nothing less likely to meet with any serious check or hindrance; but they had reckoned without their County Council. When licensing day came round there was to be a rude awakening. A few absolutely unknown and irresponsible people—who showed in every word of what they and the Licensing Committee of the County Council absurdly called their "evidence," their complete ignorance of the merits of the question, and their absolute unfitness to give even an opinion on the matters at issue—opposed the renewal of the license; and the Committee, without the slightest consideration

ef, or reference to, the perfectly well-known facts of the case, decided in their favour by imposing, as the only condition on which they would grant the new license, certain restrictions and structural alterations which the directors of the theatre declared to be almost impossible to carry out.

It should by no means be forgotten that Alderman Routledge, himself one of the most Radical of the Progressists, stated afterwards in his speech at the meeting of the Council, that this Committee had been systematically packed in the interests of one particular section, who had done everything they could to ruin the industry of music-halls in London. If this is really their object—and Alderman Routledge generally knows very well what he is talking about—they could not set to work more effectually than to lower the tone of the music-halls by driving out of the business all men of means who look for some reasonable security for their invested capital, and by throwing the trade into the hands of mere hand-to-mouth adventurers who have nothing to lose, and a good deal to win if luck chances to be favourable.

There remained an appeal from the decision of this precious Committee to the Council itself, and it cannot be said that, in the interval, the tactics of the managers of the Empire or their friends on the press were in any way judicious. A strenuous agitation was got up, many meetings were held, and many speeches were made which, no doubt, were true enough and not to be answered by any fair argument; but which were, unfortunately, admirably adapted to put up the backs of the narrow-minded, illogical men who constitute the majority of the Council, and in that way seriously to damage the cause they were intended to serve.

When the appeal was heard before the full Council, any idea of judicial gravity, decency, or reticence was thrown to the winds. The feeble opinions of Mrs. Ormiston Chant were accepted as if they were really serious evidence; all the individual Councillors who in speeches of more or less violence and irrelevancy addressed the meeting in opposition to the Empire constituted themselves with absolutely shameless partiality at once witnesses, advocates, and judges, and endorsed the original decisions of the Committee by a large majority. It was an unfortunate thing for the shareholders in the Empire Theatre, but, as an object lesson in one of the most crying evils and scandals of government by popularly elected representatives of the few people who can be got to vote at municipal elections in London, it was not without its uses.

It is not too much to say that hardly a speaker on either side showed any real appreciation of the fact that a serious principle was involved, or that the decision of the Council was likely to have far reaching effects, but the general tone of those in favour of granting the license unhampered by restrictions was undoubtedly better than that of their opponents, if only because they had a better case. In speech after speech on the opposition side the speakers gave themselves entirely away in the attempt to explain their views, and only made more and more apparent the narrow-minded personal bigotry which afflicted them. Several speakers expressed the idiotic opinion that no place which paid seventy per cent. by way of dividend could possibly be conducted in a respectable manner; others talked about women "ramping all over the place," although there had been no attempt on anybody's part to assert that anything of the sort occurred. It would hardly be possible to say what nonsense was not talked. Unfortunately I have no space at my command to give a general summary of the debate, but may call attention to the speeches of two typical members of the majority — Lord Farrer and Mr. John Burns. Lord Farrer, who made a sad confession of the anxiety and doubt which the reading of what he called the "evidence" had produced in him, was evidently terribly embarrassed—respectable, politico-economical, hide-bound red-tapist as he is—by having to keep in line with the Progressist party with which he acts, but with which he has as much real sympathy as the Girondists had with the Jacobins, and finally voted against the license—principally, it would seem, because "Mr. Macready, the great actor," had reformed the shameful saloons of the theatres fifty or sixty years ago. Mr. John Burns hardly tried to keep secret the merely personal reasons which influenced his vote. Mr. George Shipton had spoken at a public meeting in sympathy with the employees of the Empire Theatre who would be thrown out of work by the refusal of the license, and this without first obtaining permission from the mighty man of Battersea. So Mr. Burns, as "the man who had polled more votes than anybody else as a labour representative"—'Codlin's the friend, not Short"—was bound to take the opposite view. The male frequenters

of the Empire promenade smoked expensive cigars, and so offended Mr. Burns. The directors of the Empire had fought for their property, and Mr. Burns was not going to be intimidated. Equally cogent and equally unworthy of consideration were the other arguments which Mr. Burns put forward in dealing with what he rightly called a difficult and complex subject, and which influenced him in making in his judicial capacity a speech which was remarkable, even for him, for personal abuse and violent intolerance. It was distinctly humorous, by the way, to find Mr. Burns gravely warning the Council against "bogus sympathies with unemployed working people." Events move rapidly nowadays, but people can still remember that it was to his adroit manipulation of "bogus sympathies with unemployed working people" that the elect of Battersea—to which constituency the consideration of this sneer may be left—owes the position he has attained in the ranks of the new democracy.

The County Council has long been desirous of obtaining control of the theatres. Let us hope that their last escapade will not only render this impossible, but will lead to their mischievous power over the music-halls being taken away from them. That bigotry and narrow-minded intolerance are not the sole property of elected bodies I know very well—it was only the other day that the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University made himself ridiculous by prohibiting a performance of Mr. Sydney Grundy's play, "Sowing the Wind"—but I am quite certain that the interests of music-hall proprietors, managers, and performers, as well as those of public decency and public convenience, would be much safer in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain than in those of Lord Farrer, Mr. Burns, Mr. Lidgett, Mr. Charrington, Mr. M'Dougall, Earl Compton, Mr. Parkinson, and the rest of them. Let us hope that Parliament will take the same view of the matter—at all events after the impending general election.

Consider, for a moment, Mr. Irving's "Municipal Theatre" under the control of the present London County Council!

RIPPLE'S RELISH.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"A SMALL bottle of sauce, please," said I. "Stinger's if you have it."

"Yes, sir; certainly, sir, we have it," replied the grocer in the tone of a man who has more things in stock than are dreamt of in his customer's philosophy. "But let me persuade you to try a similar and superior article of our own preparation—Ripple's Relish, sir—which we can do for you at three-three instead of four-and-a-half."

As all sauces are much alike to me, and in those days I found it easier to save three farthings than to earn them, I did not need persuading.

"Very well," said I, after wondering for a moment what my wife would say, "I'll try it."

"Thank you, sir," said the grocer; "and if you'll pardon the liberty, I assure you that after trying you'll go on buying, as our poet says. Martha, my dear, cash. Three-three out of four. Your bill and change, sir. Good morning."

The somewhat disproportionate formality with which Mr. Ripple conducted this, our first business transaction, was, I afterwards found, habitual. Every penny he received—and he received a good many single pennies—he handed over to his wife, who sat all day at a desk behind a glass partition, taking for it a receipt which he passed on to the customer with a most impressive bow and flourish.

These receipt forms were adorned with a representation of Mr. Ripple's place of business—a vast emporium—with "Ripple's People's Tea Warehouse" running round the cornice in giant letters. The windows in this picture exhibited a bewildering variety of good things, which, to judge by the piles of bags and boxes to be seen as far as the eye could penetrate into the long perspective of the interior, was but a meagre sample of the stores within.

Outside those windows an aristocratic-looking and interested crowd had halted to inspect their contents. Gentlemen in tall hats and frock-coats pointed out to fashionably dressed ladies, who held them affectionately by the arm, an alluring pile of "Ripple's Best Loaf," at four-three-farthings; but the ladies, to a woman, were concentrating their attention on that more expensive luxury, "Ripple's Champion Tea" at one and-eight, several chests of which were displayed behind the next sheet of plate-glass.

In and out of the door poured two streams of customers, one welcomed by a faultlessly attired individual—was it a fancy portrait of the proprietor himself?—and the other followed by obsequious attendants carrying parcels to the line of carriages in waiting which filled one side of the street.

The houses on the other side of the street looked mean, and the pavement in front of them was tenanted solely by two dogs and a child with a hoop. Lest my readers share my wife's wonder how such a splendid shop came to be situated in a street so obviously too small for it, let me hasten to explain that the street—a by-thoroughfare near Camberwell Green—was depicted as it was; the shop, as its owner no doubt wished it to be.

But however much the artist who designed Mr. Ripple's billhead had exaggerated the size of Mr. Ripple's shop, Mr. Ripple himself did not exaggerate the merits of his relish. Even my wife, in spite of her prejudice in favour of Stinger's, was forced to admit that it was excellent; and my wife is a judge of sauces.

As the poet, quoted by Mr. Ripple, foretold, after trying we went on buying, and after we had bought relish and relish only from him for some time, we allowed him—I here use his own words—to have the privilege of supplying us with other articles: tea, coffee, sugar, bacon; anything, in short, in which he dealt.

We granted him this privilege perhaps more readily than we otherwise should have done because he was willing to supply us on credit, and, as he went on supplying us for a considerable period without pressing for payment of his account, it was naturally difficult to refuse to concede him the even greater privilege of social intercourse. As we owed him, I think, about ten pounds when he first asked us to take a friendly cup of tea "along with me and my missis," I need hardly say that we accepted the invitation with at least outward alacrity.

He, or perhaps I should say, Mrs. Ripple, gave us an excellent tea, but after it was over, I feared for a moment that we had been inveigled into the little parlour behind the shop under disgracefully false pretences.

"And now, Mr. Trevor," said Mr. Ripple, "while my missis amuses yours with the halbum, perhaps you and me can talk a little business."

"Oh! Er—yes, certainly if you wish it," I stammered out. "But next week would be more convenient."

"Not it," said Mr. Ripple, looking not a little offended. "I guess what you have in your mind, sir, but I'm not mean enough to be alluding to that, except in a sense to which I don't suppose you'll object. Now, what do you say to a chance of working off any little matter there may be between us?"

Not having the ghost of an idea of the man's meaning, I said nothing, but waited for him to explain.

"You see, sir, it's this way," he went on. "I know that relish of mine is worth pushing, and properly pushed it never has been, mainly through want of capital. Now my idea is that you, being a literary gent, could help me to push it if you'd be so good."

"Really, Mr. Ripple, I don't see how," I protested with some warmth, "unless, indeed, you expect me to turn myself into a sandwich man."

"No, no," said he soothingly. "Nothing of the kind. I simply want you to try your hand at something catching in the advertisement line. Poetry for choice. Something beginning say, 'Ripple's Relish, rich and rare,' or, 'Ripple's Relish is the best.' Them two lines have been running in my head for months, but blessed if I can find the fellows to 'em. Now if——"

"But I thought you were already provided with a poet," I interrupted.

"I was," replied the grocer gloomily. "I was. And a good man too, when not in liquor. But gin finished him. Now, if you'd condescend to fill his place I'd make it worth your while, upon my word I would."

Professional pride urged me to resent Mr. Ripple's offer. Poverty tempted me to accept it. There was—nay, is—a delicacy about my purely literary work, a fineness of point about my stories which the average editor is incapable of appreciating. As I had therefore for some time been compelled to earn the greater portion of my bread by mere journalistic drudgery, it was comparatively easy to take another downward step.

There is no need to dwell upon the details of my degradation. Suffice it to say that for three months or so I puffed "Ripple's Relish" poetically and otherwise as it had never been puffed before. Unfortunately the public were slow to respond to my exhortations. The sale of the relish, which already enjoyed a considerable local reputation, remained almost stationary, even though, working in no hireling spirit, I was prodigal in suggesting methods of giving my praises of its merits the widest possible publicity.

These suggestions Mr. Ripple, to do him justice, was not slow in adopting as far as his means would allow. His means, however, were limited, and at last he came, as he vulgarly put it, almost to the end of his tether. Instead of placarding walls and hoardings with poetical and occasionally pictorial posters he had to content himself with distributing wretched little handbills, bought at the

lowest possible rate per thousand. Literary worm though I was, I turned at this. It was so unutterably painful to me to see the effusions of my brain thrust by some impudent urchin into the half-unwilling hand of the chance passer-by, only to be forthwith tossed aside and trampled underfoot, that I made up my mind to write no more unless Mr. Ripple would promise to present my productions to the public in something like decent form; but before I had an opportunity of acquainting him with my resolution I was taken ill, and was, for a considerable period, unable to write anything for anybody whether I would or no.

I do not wish to deny that the Ripples were very kind during my illness. Mrs. Ripple was one of those excellent women known to their friends as "motherly bodies" or "good souls."

"Beef extract, my dear!" said she to my wife. "Don't you go to worry yourself about that, nor yet about nothing else that's in Ripple's stock or can be got in. And as for a nurse, well, we must see what we can do between us, sitting up turn and turn about."

Until I had that illness I had no idea how many delicacies suitable to an invalid one's grocer can supply, nor, until I recovered from it, did I realise how extremely irksome a debt of gratitude may become. Though I never paid a penny piece in hard cash for them, I consider that the little luxuries with which the Ripples furnished me were dearly bought. The price they demanded for their tinned soups, grapes, jellies, and so forth, was nothing less than our friendship, our intimate friendship. Now, to take tea occasionally with the Ripples was one thing. To have my society persistently sought by Mr. Ripple whenever he was at leisure was quite another. My experiences one Sunday afternoon, when he induced me to go with him by boat to Gravesend, were painful in the extreme, but my wife assures me that my sufferings were slight compared with hers on the never-to-be-forgotten day when she accompanied Mrs. Ripple on a shopping expedition to the West End.

We did our best to make the Ripples understand how preposterous it was to expect us to satisfy their claim to public recognition of their lien upon our gratitude, but hints were wasted on them, and they seemed impervious to snubs. I doubt whether they were even aware of their social inferiority to us. The narrow circle in which they moved was chiefly made up of people even more destitute than themselves of the elements of culture and refinement, and it probably never dawned upon them that anybody could possibly be ashamed to be seen with them anywhere.

To do us justice we were not, or we did not let them see that we were, ashamed to be seen with them—in their own neighbourhood—into which nobody worth knowing was likely to stray. We ourselves had only been driven to take refuge there by stress of financial weather, and when the depression filled up—soon after my recovery a legacy from a distant relative placed me in a position of temporary and strictly comparative affluence—we at once prepared to slip our cables, if that nautical manœuvre may be taken as equivalent to going away and leaving no address.

Little did we guess what we were about to lose when we decided to leave Camberwell for Hampstead and cut all connection with the Ripples. I had been offered on certain conditions, one of which was the investment of my little capital in the venture, the assistant-editorship of the "Passing Hour," a newly-established journal of considerable promise. How was I to know that that promise would never blossom into performance? When I met Mr. Ripple casually in the street the very day before we moved, how was I to know that he?—but I must not anticipate.

"Trevor, my boy," said he, greeting me with even more than his usual unseemly boisterousness, "congratulate me. I've come into money."

"I'm delighted to hear it, only I hope it isn't enough to retire on. I don't want to find my occupation gone, you know," said I, thinking it judicious to throw a little dust into his eyes.

"Occupation gone?" he repeated, looking puzzled. "Oh, I see; you mean the poetry making. But you needn't be afraid. Every penny's going into the relish. It's a man or a mouse with William Ripple this time. I wonder if you're game to stand in?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, beginning to fear he had heard of the improvement in my circumstances, and hoped to induce me to sacrifice my little all on the altar of his faith in the potentialities of his relish.

"Come in here and have a drink, and I'll tell you," said he.

My fears proved groundless. He wanted me to go into partnership with him, it is true, but he was generous enough to say that he considered my brains more than

equivalent to his cash. So flattering was this compliment, so plausible were the figures he put before me, and so contagious was his enthusiasm that, instead of refusing then and there to have anything to do with his proposal, I asked for time to think it over.

"Quite right, my boy," said he approvingly, "quite right; never do nothing in a hurry. You'd like to talk things over with the missis, I dare say; but, bless you, I know she'll be on my side. As sensible a little woman as ever stepped is your good lady, sir. You're sure you won't have another drop? Very well, then, I'll say good morning, and expect you to look in some time to-morrow."

When I did "talk things over with the missis," that sensible little woman soon extirpated from my mind the germ of an idea of casting in my lot with Mr. Ripple, which I confess had established itself there.

"My dear Henry," she exclaimed, "you don't mean to say you seriously think of condemning yourself and me to lifelong association with such odiously vulgar people?"

"No, no, my love," I hastened to reply, "I don't. Only, you know, if our well-meaning friend's dream were fulfilled, we might become as rich as brewers."

"Ah," said my wife, "'if' and 'might' are all very well, but I prefer a prospect in the indicative mood such as the 'Hour' offers. Besides, think of the position. Think of the people with whom we shall be brought in contact."

As I quite endorse Mr. Ripple's opinion of my wife's sagacity, I allowed myself to be persuaded to write a polite but frigid note in the third person beginning, "Mr. Trevor presents his compliments to Mr. Ripple," and declining his offer. The next day we carried out our original intention; but our Camberwell landlady must have betrayed her trust, for Mrs. Ripple called several times at our new abode. As we felt it was no good to do things by halves, we were never at home to her, and at last we tired her out.

For the next two years we saw nothing either of her or her husband. We heard of them, though—at least in common with the rest of civilised mankind, we heard of "Ripple's Relish." As everybody knows, that condiment became world-famous after the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's applied for an injunction to restrain its proprietor from displaying his favourite injunction, "Try Ripple's Relish," upon the dome of that venerable fane by means of a magic lantern and the electric light.

Soon after the trial of this action assured the future of "Ripple's Relish," "The Passing Hour" passed away for ever, and I was once more reduced to a condition of most acute impecuniosity. In my necessity I wrote to Mr. Ripple reminding him of our former friendship, and offering once more to devote my pen to his service on his own terms.

Ah me! His terms are fairly liberal, but when I see my employer positively rolling in affluence, and think of what might have been, bitterness fills my soul. Yet I cannot blame myself, I cannot even blame my wife. As I have asked before, how were we to know?

BHOPAL.

The jungle-clothed hills of Central India separate the province of Bhopal from the outside world, and although the railway traverses the remote native state, the country remains almost undisturbed by the passing traffic to which it only offers an infinitesimal contribution.

The principality of Bhopal possesses the distinction of being the only native province under petticoat government; and her Highness, the Begum, a widowed Mohammedan Princess in her fiftieth year, rules over a million subjects, the annual revenue of three hundred thousand pounds giving her a distinguished position among native royalties.

Women have always exercised an important political influence in India, and the seclusion of "purdah" often veils the hand which pulls the strings of complicated schemes and subtle intrigues; but the records of modern times show few instances of regal authority placed entirely in female hands. The Begum of Bhopal was one of those native potentates who proved their loyalty to England by contributing large sums of money towards the expenses of the campaign in 1888 for the defence of the Indian frontiers, and the substantial aid provided by the tributary Princess of this retired province amounted to sixteen lakhs of rupees, equivalent to six hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling.

The capable administration of Bhopal proclaims the decided character and acute intelligence of the native Ranee, educated far beyond the usual modern standard of an Oriental sovereign, and adding a knowledge of English and Sanscrit to the classic Persian, which is studied as the sacred

tongue of Islam and adopted as the orthodox language of every Mohammedan Court.

This accomplished Begum has also written a valuable book on female life and influence, in the hope of elevating the moral and intellectual tone of Indian womanhood in the higher classes. For this purpose the stately Urdu — musical as Italian and sonorous as Greek—is the chosen medium of communication. This pure type of Hindustani, on the lips of native aristocracy, differs entirely in pronunciation and structure from the guttural dialects in common use, which exemplify the various degrees of decadence from comparative culture to absolute barbarism. The Begum has taken an important step in the direction of modern progress by defraying the expenses of a medical education for one of the ladies of her court. This dusky damsel showed such special aptitude for her professional studies that, on completing her university course at Calcutta, she was sent to England for further advantages before returning to practise in her native city, where the stringent regulations of "purdah" and "zenana" forbid any acceptance of medical aid unless offered at the hands of a woman.

The Mohammedan conquerors of Bhopal apparently contented themselves with establishing an hereditary dynasty in the province; and, though the reins of government were held in an iron grasp, the seclusion of the capital—destitute of special manufactures and separated by mountain and forest from the great caravan routes between north and south—prevented the erection of those architectural memorials which signalise the conquests of Islam in more accessible districts. The steep precipices of the Ghauts and the perils of the pathless jungle barred the way of progress, and forbade that "education of contact" which rouses local emulation and fans the spark of aspiration into the flame of achievement.

The sleeping city of Bhopal, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," still presents unusual difficulties to the social reformer, and awakes from the dreams of ages by almost imperceptible degrees. The station stands on a sunburnt heath outside the walls, and a little dâk bungalow on a ridge of the tawny moorland offers a rude shelter to the European traveller who breaks his journey through Central India at secluded Bhopal. The advent of visitors excites the lively interest of the local Jehus, and sundry primitive tongas, drawn by hump-backed white bullocks, arrive at the door of the rustic bungalow, while we discuss "chota hazri" in the latticed verandah as the roseate dawn pales the lingering stars and flushes the dreary moorland with pink and lilac hues. Diving beneath a yellow awning, with our feet dangling from the springless cart, we subside into a heap of fragrant hay, placed for the accommodation of passengers in the least objectionable of the barbaric vehicles at our command. A noisy brown native, clad in the slightly modified costume of Paradise, acts as charioteer, and with unnecessary outlay of ill-directed energy galvanises the long-suffering bullock into such a rapid trot that the whole attention of the fares is absorbed, for the first mile of the expedition, by the strenuous efforts required to avoid an ignominious fall into the dusty road.

The break-neck pace slackens to a deliberate amble within the city gates, as we mingle with the gaily-clad crowds which fill the gaudy bazaars with colour and movement. Robes of orange and blue, scarlet and purple, yellow and green, glow with dazzling brilliancy in the keen light of the morning sun, the vivid tints of turban and sari enhanced by the multitude of nude bronze figures which divide the comparative popularity of dress and undress into equal proportions. Although the common trades of India may be studied in the crumbling arcades and tumbledown stalls of the Bhopal streets, not a single instance of local invention or artistic handiwork rewards our exploration of dusty passages, dilapidated balconies, and djm chambers filled with heterogeneous merchandise.

Even the all-pervading commerce of the West, which gains a footing in every native city and shoots tons of rubbish into Eastern bazaars, obtains but a feeble hold on the affections of Central India; and the archaic patterns of all European goods show that the foreign element meets with scant favour in this old-world state.

Shady roads branch out in every direction beneath the dense foliage of towering palm, feathery tamarind, and blossoming neem-tree, where green parrots and chattering mynas dispute the position with the ubiquitous and impertinent Indian crow. There are no sidewalks. The throngs of foot-passengers jostle against mules, bullocks, and camels, palanquins borne on bare brown shoulders, palm-thatched waggons, and prancing horses ridden by turbaned soldiers. Grey Brahmini cows perambulate the narrow streets, and the continual aggressions of these pampered animals afford

some excuse for the raids of the Moslem population, which occasionally wages savage war against the sacred herds. Personal experience certainly suggests a secular rather than a religious origin to the "Cow Riots," which often assume the proportions of a civil war, for the patience of the unbeliever is sorely taxed by the perpetual encroachments of the symbolical kine. The reverence shown to the cow as the type of Nature's beneficence resembles the cultus of Ceres in the early days of Greece, and the veneration paid to the sacred animal of Hindu theology dates from that distant past when the myths of the primitive world reflected the pastoral life which belonged to the so-called golden age.

A lordly elephant led by a turbaned mahout terrifies the frisky horses, which dash frantically aside as though fearing to be trodden under foot, or gored by the sweeping ivory curves so carefully guided by the attendants of the royal stud. Houses painted in glaring tints of red, blue, and ochre enliven the dim alleys and irregular streets, the external surface of every wall covered with a white tracery representing Hindu gods and mythological animals. The gnarled trunk of an ancient peepul-tree forms a diminutive chapel where a vermilion-tinted divinity looms in grotesque outline through the shadows; and weird images with glittering crowns gleam from the cavernous arches of a dusky temple. Two lotus-covered tanks cool the burning air of the stifling city, which lies in a hollow of the moorland, and is shut in by the green zone of wooded hills which encircles Central India. Slender minarets and pearly domes indicate the prevailing creed, but mosque and temple are alike destitute of architectural beauty and historical interest.

The sharp sunlight darts like gleaming sword-blades through the fringe of foliage which overhangs the placid water, where groups of bathers dive among the azure lilies, and sportive children wind the tangled verdure round their slim brown bodies as they splash in and out of the tranquil pool, or sun themselves on the marble steps kissed by the rippling wavelets. A woman with pink draperies girt closely round her slender limbs makes an impromptu cradle of a gigantic leaf above a green mesh of swaying stalks, and lays her dusky baby upon this floating raft while she washes her white sári. A crumbling archway frames a long perspective of gilded colonnades at the side of a street, glowing with light and colour; and a tall Hindu in the dark uniform of his race leads two cheetahs, purring and hissing like huge cats, at the end of a long chain, and giving a strange touch of barbaric life to the unfamiliar scene.

The stately palace of the Begum stands near the city walls, and commands extensive views of the brown wilderness which skirts the dark depths of impenetrable jungle. The broken outlines of innumerable spires and cupolas, white as snow and bristling with spiky pinnacles, cut sharply into the radiant blue of the Indian sky. A colossal gateway faces the street, where turbaned guards pace up and down, armed with matchlock and spear. Native servants in striped tunics gossip with the crowds which pace to and fro, engaged in the multitudinous business of the royal household, or waiting for an audience either with the sovereign or with her Ministers of State. The Prime Minister's carriage, a ramshackle barouche drawn by prancing Arab horses, awaits his exit from the Council Chamber, and he emerges from the palace clad in flowing robes and glittering with jewelled orders. A grey-haired chamberlain accompanies him to the gate and courteously enquires our errand in perfect English. On ascertaining our desire to see the palace he graciously offers to ask the royal permission for a favour seldom granted, as the constant residence of the native Court generally renders the interior of the edifice forbidden ground. In this instance the request wins an immediate consent, and we follow the dignified official into the huge building which surrounds three sides of a spacious quadrangle, where a brilliant concourse ebbs and flows in picturesque variety of costume and colour. Peasants bear bunches of bananas and baskets of vegetables to the servants' quarters; grooms fill clattering buckets at the central fountain; soldiers relieve guard; and turbaned sheiks, waiting for an audience, spread their prayer-carpets in a white arcade, and utilise the spare time in devotion. Merchants with bales of silk and embroidery for the ladies of the Court solace a long delay with gurgling hubble-bubbles; and solemn-looking greybeards, with long scrolls of parchment in their hands, discuss the contents of the closely-written pages as they lean on the marble basin of a brimming fountain, where blue doves and snowy pigeons preen and flutter their downy plumage in undisturbed security. The Mohammedan nations, always exemplary in their treatment of the animal world, regard the pigeon with especial

favour as "the bird of the Holy Spirit," and the sacred doves are supported by public subscription.

After a momentary pause while the Muezzin's noontide call to prayer rings from the minaret of the royal mosque, and our conductor prostrates himself towards Mecca with the Oriental simplicity which knows no shame in yielding public obedience to the dictates of religion, we follow him through an interminable suite of State apartments lavishly decorated with crude designs and glaring colours. Artificial flowers disfigure every room, and display an endless variety of tone and texture. Blossoms of wax and wool, feathers and foil, beads and muslin, stand as centre-pieces on exquisite tables of costly mosaic, or shelter their appalling ugliness under glass shades in every nook and corner. A huge trophy of waxen fruit occupies a tripod of sandalwood and mother-of-pearl, and a splendid Benares vase holds a glaring bouquet of red woollen roses. Coarse tablecloths of vulgar pattern and crude aniline dye hide the delicate ivory carving which covers chests of black teakwood with a web of filmy lace; and cushions of cotton-backed satin conceal the golden embroideries of a beautiful divan with a hideous medley of magenta and scarlet. Countless mirrors reflect the nightmare of colour, and the tawdry finery of the European element overpowers the harmonious beauty of native handiwork. In the pillared Durbar Hall, where the provincial Rajahs pay their homage to the Mohammedan Queen, a thick "purdah" hangs before the royal divan which is occupied by the Ranee when she gives audience to the native chieftains, who stand outside the impassable barrier which veils their sovereign. A stone cloister flanks a formal garden reserved for the exclusive use of royalty; miniature fountains play amid gay parterres; and gilded kiosks adorn a marble terrace, where the Begum and her only daughter spend the sunset hour when the cares of State are laid aside, and the stifling "purdah" is exchanged for the peace and coolness of the flower-filled pleasaunce.

An immense pavilion used as the summer palace encloses this green retreat, and contributes to the absolute retirement of the spot, to which no sound penetrates from the external world. The chamberlain unlocks a low-browed door with a key hanging from his golden chain of office, and admits us into a magnificent vaulted hall with stone pillars and arches elaborately carved, but plastered over with barbaric disregard of every artistic principle, and wreathed with wax flowers and artificial ivy, for which we are informed that her Highness has paid an almost incalculable sum. Lovely stands of Benares lacquer-work groan beneath the weight of musical boxes, mechanical toys, and cheap German prints. Glittering chandeliers dangle their crystal drops from the arched ceiling, ribbed and fluted like a cathedral roof, and common rag-dolls of English make stand in regiments on priceless cabinets of ebony and silver. Persian prayer-mats of softest hue lie on glaring carpets where red peonies sprawl over a green background, and geometrical patterns divide the coarse material into huge squares which suggest a fabric taken in by weekly instalments.

The royal mind has not yet learned to discriminate between the comparative value of native handicraft, representing centuries of artistic culture, and the discarded monstrosities of Western manufacture belonging to a past generation. The extraordinary conglomeration of absolute rubbish with perfect specimens of Indian art points to the transitional state which halts between two opinions. The early days of female emancipation in Eastern lands frequently show a promiscuous admiration of Western productions quite irrespective of their intrinsic worth, and intellectual ability is no criterion of judgement in questions of taste during this passing phase of blind enthusiasm. The old chamberlain speaks of his royal mistress with reverential affection, and we share his regret that the exigencies of time and travel forbid the delay involved by a personal interview with her Highness; but previous experience of the mode adopted by native royalty to impress the foreign mind with the importance of an audience, prevents the expression of any wish for an honour which is frequently postponed day after day until the magnitude of the favour is supposed to be duly impressed upon the recipient.

As the shadows lengthen across the sun-burnt moorland, and a faint breeze whispers through the fluttering foliage of a drooping neem-tree which shades the entrance of the dâk bungalow, we descend the ridge of the heath to a little river where bullocks and ponies are drinking from the shallow current. Women in red sáris and cotton bodices which leave the brown waist bare, fill the tall clay jars gracefully poised on their dusky heads, and an aged man toils up

the rocky bank with a heavy water-skin dripping from his shoulder. Shaggy buffaloes lie down beneath a mossy crag where the stream expands into a wide pool; a native shepherd drives his long-haired flock to a distant fold; the tinkling sheep-bells echo softly through the stillness, and the pastoral charm of the tranquil scene exhales the aroma of that vanished past which for ever breathes through the present of the unchanging East. The bristling spikes and pinnacles of the royal palace stand out in white relief against the burning gold of the sunset sky; the pale minarets of the city mosques reflect the amber glow on every polished shaft; a purple bloom tinges the tawny heath; and as the little procession of peasants climbs the steep ascent from the shadowy glen, the last gleam of the setting sun sparkles on silver bangles and nose-rings, and turns a brazen lotah into a blaze of concentrated light.

In the small hours of the following morning, we stumble across the dusky moorland to the little station; the white turban of the porter who shoulders our trunks serving the purpose of a lantern in front of us. As the train threads the dense jungles of the Central Provinces, and skirts the steep acclivities of the wooded Ghauts, the isolation of Bhopal becomes evident, and we realise the difficulty of the problem to be solved by the native sovereign who strives to raise the status of her subjects by keeping them in touch with advancing knowledge, and teaching them to win for themselves a worthy place in the records of modern India.

BLIND LARRY.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

THE summer was far advanced before the Gossoon's first letter came. The red-painted "side" car drove in as usual about ten o'clock one sunny morning, and Taedey Coakley observed that he found it "mortal dhry"—not an unusual remark for him—as he handed the solitary mail-bag to Mrs. Lunan, who received it in the capacity of postmistress with a nonchalance that was ever the admiration of the village. It was a bracing experience to Gurteen—which was always fairly represented at the starting and arrival of the mail-car—to see the easy familiarity with which their postmistress handled Her Majesty's mails. Some commended the exhibition, others shook their heads; and once old Ned Galagher, the stone-breaker, half accounted for, half excused the display of such superhuman nerve by the fact that "the pore woman had buried three husbands." But that is by the way. The point Gurteen wished to emphasize afterwards was that there was really nothing that morning to show that there was a letter come for blind Larry at last, and that if Taedey Coakley knew about it, it was just like him—bad cess to him!—not to let on. However, the news was soon set afoot, and there had not been such a pleasant buzz of excitement in the village since Patsey O'Rourke left the tax collector for dead at the cross-roads.

Mrs. Lunan was the first to make the discovery—naturally. Then little Peggy stole in, barefooted, as she had done for many a day, to know if there was "e'er a Mericky letther for owld Larry;" and the austere official unwillingly produced her find from beneath her blue apron. But even into the administration of Government functions human nature forces its way, and Her Majesty's representative at Gurteen delivered up the letter with most unofficial tears in her eyes, saying: "Here 'tis fur him. Glory be to God! I was goin' to carry it up mesilf." Peggy clasped the precious thing to her ragged little bosom, and sped up the dusty street out of the village to the crumbling little hut on the hillside, where two or three breathless urchins, who had already brought the news, awaited her coming in intense excitement. On the crazy old settle sat Larry, his yearning eyes turned to the door, trembling all over in his eagerness; and when the child's light footstep touched the threshold—he had heard her eager panting draw nearer and nearer as she climbed the steep boreen—he stretched out his eager hands, crying, "Praise be to God, let me feel it!" Too breathless to say anything, Peggy laid her treasure in the old man's hands, and sat incontinently on the earthen floor watching the nervous fingers run caressingly over the envelope while she caught her breath. As she waited, the tiny room gradually filled with those who had heard the good news, and who hastened to rejoice with the blind man's joy; but not a word was spoken, for great tears stood in his eyes, and the women stood looking in silence, expressing their sympathy to each other by an animated dumb show. After a little, Judy Bralligan, assuming the duties of hostess, began to blow the wood-fire noisily.

"'Tis as good fur me to bile a grain av tea fur ye, while some one reads it to us," she said, addressing the rest.

Then came the difficulty, who was to read it? They were chiefly women who were present, for the men had gone to work, and to read print is one thing, but to read a letter written with pen and ink is another. Judy Bralligan opened it with a hairpin, and Larry held the empty envelope while they all tried, but no one got beyond: "New York, July 24th. Dear father, I hopes this finds——," and they had three tries each all round, and had finished the tea, when Father Murphy came in and settled the matter. The letter, which was short, told that the Gossoon was earning five dollars a week in a coal store, and that he hoped soon to get a rise, but beyond that he did not make mention of himself; the rest was filled with messages, more or less flippant, to everybody, and startling surmises as to the changes that had taken place since his departure—three months before. Then the cottage emptied gradually, and old Larry was left still holding his treasure in his hands.

For a week afterwards all who could read were invited to display their accomplishment in Larry's cottage, and by that time the old man knew by heart the words that were then completely obliterated by kindly, grimy fingers. In due time it was answered, and it was to me that Larry dictated what he wished to say. One sentence alone I will quote.

"Tell him," he said, "I seen a bright light shinin' whin I tuk the letther in me han's." I wonder what he meant? For he had never seen what we call light.

As time went on, more letters came—not many, but enough to make old Larry happy. He knew them all by heart, and could tell you the contents of each by running his finger over the first few lines. He sat all day in summer, and part of the day in winter, on the cliff, where he felt the wind from the west buffet his face, and then plaited creels with the green withes they brought him, always thankful for his health and tidings from the Gossoon; but he never touched his fiddle, at least in the day-time. He grew a little feeble in those years, and rheumatism bent his spare frame unmercifully; but his great grey eyes still wore the same look of steadfast patience as if, blind only to material things, they ever rested on something passing sweet in the far-away land where spirits live and move.

It was the fifth summer after the Gossoon had gone that a letter came telling that he was coming back to pay his native village a visit. And again every one flocked to the cabin on the hill to congratulate Larry, and talk it over with him. He stayed at home that day to receive his visitors, answering all with a happy smile and with the same words: "Ay, he's comin', sure enough. God is good, God is good." And in the evening he tuned his mildewed fiddle, and played "The Young May Moon" and "The O'Donoghue's Gathering" for Terence Flannigan's children.

Judy Bralligan hobbled up in a day or two, and was for putting the cottage straight against young Larry would come, suggesting a coat of whitewash outside, and a nail or two in the old settle.

"'Twould be like new," she asserted, "if ye nelt the west side av it on agin, an' spilt a drop av red paint on it."

But Larry would not hear of it.

"'Tis home he's comin'," he said, "an' he must find it as he left it, or 'twouldn't be like home at all, at all. 'Tis a rapper on the door widout, an' blinds in the windies ye'll be wanting nixt," he added, with a fine sarcasm.

So things were left as they were, and the cottage waited in all the glory of its dilapidation for the coming of the heir, with its summer crop of young oats and yellow weed waving cheerily on the remnant of thatch, and the blue turf smoke gently welling through the open door. Larry plaited his creels at home all day, never venturing out lest the Gossoon would come in his absence; and when a step sounded faintly from the road below he would pause in his work, and the slender withes, projecting from the half-finished basket, would quiver in his trembling hands until the sound died away or came close enough to be identified. Then came another letter, from Queenstown this time, telling that the Gossoon had landed and would be home in two days, and it was arranged that Con Deasey should go to Dunmanway to meet him with the same cart—and, indeed, the same horse—with which he had driven him there five years before.

"'Twill be a raäl home-comin' fur him," he said to me, with child-like joy in his face. "The first thing he'll clap eyes on whin he leps out av the thrain, will be Con an' the owld horse; 'twill be raäl home, glory be to God; nauthin' sthrange or new, only all owld friends."

At last the great day came. Larry was up by daybreak, groping his way about the two rooms, to make sure that everything was in its accustomed place. With his own hands he rolled the block of wood and set

it on end by the corner of the settle with the only chair at the other side, so that he and the Gossoon might breakfast together as they used; for Con was to bring him home by noon, and Larry determined to eat nothing until then. Indeed, he was too excited to do anything but wander to and fro through the cottage and tell his beads again and again in his thankfulness.

Old Judy looked in early, and once more ventured on a suggestion that a real table, with legs, might be substituted for the block, and offered to provide a tablecloth and a whole cup and saucer; but her ideas were scouted by Larry.

"Maybe the boy will have fine notions in him now, afther he being over for so long," she hazarded.

"What talk have ye av notions, arrah?" enquired the old man. "'Tis home he's comin', an' 'tis the same owld cup wid the bit out av the north side av it he'll be looking fur, an' not any av ye're quality chaney!"

So Judy retired beaten again, though this time she succeeded in getting leave to bake a cake with a half-stone of "seconds" she had bought at the mill on Saturday, and bring it up at twelve o'clock with "a thrashcaun av butter to mois'en it." After that the morning went slowly for Larry, though he tried to make his creels as usual. Now and again a neighbour looked in to say, "Is he wid ye yet?" to which Larry would make answer, "Not yet, thank ye kindly." And so the day wore on until eleven o'clock, when Terence Flannigan turned in as he passed with the usual question, and told Larry the time by the big steel watch which he lost in the autumn when he was cutting turf, and found again by the sound of its ticking in a furze-bush ten yards from where he stood. He consulted its weather-beaten face for some time, and then declared it to be "nigh on eleven, the sun was so high above," and the blind man prayed to the Virgin that his last hour of waiting might not be so long as the others, and went on plaiting the creel he held between his knees. He paused presently to listen to a light footstep approaching quickly, and turned his eager face to the door as Peggy, now a slender maid of fifteen, but still barefooted, came in. She ran to his side and knelt there, laying one little brown hand on his long white fingers while she tossed back her tangled brown hair to look into his face.

"They've come," she panted.

"Who?" asked the blind man, starting and letting his work slip to the ground.

"The Gossoon an' ——" The girl stopped.

"Glory be to God! An' is he finely now, tell me?" cried Larry, clasping his trembling hands.

"He is, faith, indeed, an' he have a weskit of fur under the 'coat, an' a goold chain hangin' be a watch."

"Thanks be to God that brought him to me so safe an' so quick," said the old man, with the tears running down his face.

"Ay, 'tis quick he was, fur 'tis in a side car av Dempsey's in Dunmanway he come, and Con Deasey isn't back at all yit."

"A side car? An' lift Con behind?" Larry repeated slowly. "'Tis the way he thought it too long till he was here. Go to the door, asthore, an' see is he comin' up the road."

"He's below in Casey's shop, talkin'," said the girl slowly, watching the blind man's face with pain in her bright eyes.

"Ay, they'll be askin' him all about Mericky," said Larry, with something like pride.

"He'd have come up before to ye," said the girl quickly, "only she said——"

"Who said, Peggy, avic?"

"She said. Sure he have a wife wid him!"

The old man grew ashy white, and trembled piteously.

"A mortal nate lump av a girl," Peggy hurried on, looking anxiously at the poor white face and frightened eyes. "She have a hat an' feather, an' shiny boots, an' a blue umbrella, an'—all," and she paused anxiously, watching the effect of her words, while Larry sat still, only catching at his breath with dry sobs and wringing his thin fingers together.

"She have goold rings on the fingers av her, an' goold dhrops in her ears. She's just a raäl lady," the girl went on, without taking her eyes off his face. "An' they're all sayin' below 'tis a great match he've made entirely."

"Ay, it is that, it is that, sure," cried he, struggling with his dismay. "God forgive the selfish heart that's in me this day! On'y, oh, Peggy, alannah! he'll never be me Gossoon no more! But whisht! I mustn't talk like that, 'tisn't right. The good God has provided fur him. 'Tis thankful I ought to be that he's safe an' sound, an' I am—I am thankful, God knows," and at the last words his voice rose almost to a cry, and he flung his head

back as one who looked to heaven, letting it fall upon his breast again. For a long time neither spoke. Peggy still knelt by his side, bending her brown head from time to time to dry her tears with her elbow before they should fall on the cold hands she held in both hers—for she loved the lonely blind man, who had always been so gentle and good to her, and her tender heart bled for him now.

The bright sun shone on the flagstone outside the dim little room, and all the air was filled with soft summer sounds—the chatter of the martins as they dipped and soared in the blue; the sleepy hum of the myriad insect life of August; the distant whetting of a scythe; and, mingling with all, the shrill murmur of the little waves at play as they lost their footing on the beach and ran laughing back to leap again. Only in the cottage there was silence while the blind man waited for his son.

The chapel bell sent its mellow tones throbbing through the sunlight at noon; and, at the well-known call to prayer, the old man made the sign of the Holy Cross on his bosom, and whispered a Paternoster to heaven with a prayer for pity in his aching loneliness. The day wore on, and the sun climbed down the heaven until its bright rays crept in sideways at the door and window. The silver sunlight moved round to the hearth and passed on until it rested on the white hair of the blind man, and showed all the agony in his pale, drawn face with a distinctness that seemed brutal; but he never stirred or sought to shield himself from its fierce heat. At last—when four o'clock had come and gone—at last, after those long hours of waiting, the firm step of a man climbed the steep boreen and approached the door. The bent head by the hearth was raised to listen with a despairing intentness, and as the sound drew nearer a light of joy that was altogether holy shone on the weary, white face. In a moment all the dreary waiting, all the bitterness of disappointment was forgotten, and the blind man arose with trembling, outstretched hands, crying:

"Tis he! It is my son! Glory be to the good God."

As he spoke the door was darkened, and the Gossoon came in. He paused for a moment and glanced round the room, and then going to his father, slowly enough, stood silently while the old man laid his hands on his shoulders and sobbed with joy and thankfulness.

"Sure I knew ye'd come, Larry, avic, though they kep ye from me. Spake to me, my son, spake a word to me!"

"Don't ye take on like that, now. I'm all right, and blamed glad to see ye; I am, straight," said the Gossoon, glancing uneasily over his shoulder towards the door.

"Ay, 'tis his voice," said the old man brokenly, "on'y ye spake like a man. Ah, Larry, boy, many a time I've prayed on me binded knees to be alive fur this, an' sure the Howly Vargin heered me, praise be to her. An' 'tis a fine suit of clothes ye have," he added with pride, running his fingers over everything, "an' a chain wid watch in the pocket, I'll be bound. Look at that, now! 'Deed, I have no doubt ye're a fine hearty man too, God bless ye; I have to rise me han's to put them on the two big shoulders av ye."

The Gossoon, who was barely an average specimen of man, and an unlovely one to boot, laughed a pleased laugh at this, and old Larry laughed with joy at the sound, and told his son to sit by him while Peggy would boil the kettle and make a cup of tea. The Gossoon sat down as he was bid, with his father holding his hand and asking questions without waiting for an answer. The existence of his wife seemed forgotten by all except young Larry, who cast anxious glances at the door from time to time, and looked with some dissatisfaction round him at the cottage where he had spent his childhood. Once or twice he would have said something that would have jarred terribly on his father had not Peggy, watching him from the hearth where she sat with the bellows on her knee, seen it in his eyes, and, nothing abashed by the moleskin waistcoat and watch-chain, flashed a glance of such virulent warning at him that the words never came.

Then Judy Bralligan brought her promised cake, apologising garrulously for its late appearance, which she said was because she had "ne'er a stick in the house to make a bit of fire until she gathered a brusna with her own two han's in the woodeen east av Father Murphy's." But Peggy knew that Judy could see from the window of her shop at the corner when the Gossoon left the village, and had waited until she saw him go. Soon the tea was made, and Judy was invited to partake of her own baking, and the trio drew together round the log table while Peggy waited on them, keeping a threatening eye on the Gossoon, who seemed to think it but poor fare for a welcome home. Not so old Larry. Worn out with watching and

disappointment, and seeing nothing of his son's dissatisfaction, his spirits rose, and he sat quietly happy when the Gossoon began to talk of himself and his magnificent prospects in the coal store in New York. He talked big, and talked loud, with a fine independent spirit, and his father was proud of him, and asked the others from time to time, "Did they hear that, now?" and "Would they believe it?" to which old Judy and Peggy answered in tones of becoming respect and awe, while they openly discarded the young man's boasting and interchanged looks of incredulity, not to say derision. Indeed, matters came to such a pitch that old Judy, from pure malice, kept on stirring her tea with the spoon—there was only one—though she knew the Gossoon was waiting for it.

But old Larry knew nothing of this. He only knew that his son was come back, and was sitting next him as he used to sit when he was a boy, and in listening to his voice he forgot the years of loneliness and the disappointment of the morning—forgot, too, that the Gossoon was a married man now, and that there was a wife at hand who would always have the first claim on him. He began to tell young Larry how he had lived on his letters while he was away, how he knew them all by heart, and how good it was to have him back again for a while, and then he went on to tell how they would spend their time together and everything would be as it used to be. He would play "The Night of the Fun," he said, if Peggy would reach him the fiddle, and he was stretching out his hand with a happy smile on his noble face to take it from the girl, when the door was darkened again by some one who paused on the threshold. The Gossoon started away a little, but his father, whose quick ear had heard the step, held him gently next him with his left hand, saying:

"Kape ye're sate, Larry boy," and turning his wonderful face round cried: "Come in, neighbour, an' hear the music that's ris to life in me again."

"It ain't no music that I wants," said the new-comer, advancing, "it's jest that husband of mine they said was here. Lord, what a hole!"

Larry paused with his fiddle still held at arm's length.

"Who's that?" he asked in a puzzled voice.

"It's me wife," said the Gossoon sullenly.

The fiddle fell with a hollow crash to the ground, and laying both his hands on his son's arm, he held him tight while the colour died from his face and the pallor seemed to flash into it; but in a moment he recovered himself, and stretching out his right hand he said, with an effort:

"If ye're my son's wife, ye're my daughter. Come here to me, my—daughter."

She was a young woman, with coarse dark hair and bold black eyes, wearing a light, half-soiled summer costume, and carrying a blue silk parasol that looked as if it had taken life hardly. She was taken aback at first when old Larry had grasped his son's arm and turned his white face to her; but now, when he spoke gently, she coolly scanned the room, ignoring alike the hand that was stretched out to her and the furious glances of the other two women.

"Lord, what a hole!" she repeated. "I judge this ain't your father's house, Lawrence?"

"It is," muttered the Gossoon, without raising his eyes from the ground.

"An' ye're welcome to it," said Larry, still holding out his hand.

"And is this what you've been and brought me to?" cried the woman, flaring up, completely ignoring the old man's gesture. "If you want to set eyes on me again, come out of it now—this minute."

The Gossoon rose from his seat on the settle, and the blind man rose with him, a speechless agony in his face.

"Let me go," said the younger man sulkily, trying to loosen his father's grasp on his arm.

"Oh, my God!" cried the old man shrilly, not noticing what his son was doing, but turning towards the strange voice, "oh, my God! will ye take him from me?"

"Are you coming out of this? It isn't fit for a dog to live in," repeated the woman.

"Let me go, I tell ye," said the Gossoon, jerking his arm sullenly from the nerveless fingers that held it, and moving with downcast eyes towards the door.

As he passed his wife she laid a hand on his arm and pushed him on; and turning to the blind man who stood where his son had left him, his hand still as if in the act of grasping, she said, with a shade of softening in her voice:

"See here, old man, me and Lawrence will send you something, and you git a decent house over you and a new coat on your back. Maybe we'll just look round again," and she followed her husband out.

Motionless, as if carved in stone, the gaunt figure stood, still with outstretched hand, while the footsteps sounded more and more faintly down the road, and died away into silence.

Suddenly the blind man woke from his trance, and with an inarticulate cry full of unshed tears raised his hands on high; then flinging them out with a piteous gesture of entreaty, he started forward, crying:

"My son, my son! Give me back my son!"

He had forgotten his blindness, and moved quickly to the door; but in his path lay the half-finished creel he was working at that morning, and striking his foot against it he fell helplessly across the threshold. In a moment the women were kneeling by him—the girl choking with sobs, the older woman praying aloud through her slower tears. Tenderly and with much labour they raised him and laid him on his humble bed, and bathed his bleeding forehead with icy water from the spring. When he opened his eyes again he bade them prepare a welcome for his son who was coming home, he said, and would never leave him again; and Peggy must go down to the village to see if he were come.

With flying feet the girl did go, praying that she might bring the Gossoon back once more with her. But it was evening then, and they were gone—young Larry and his wife—back to Dunmanway on their way to Queenstown. Slowly returning, she told the sick man to wait a little longer.

He smiled contentedly, and said nothing. Presently he asked for his rosary, and lying there in the summer twilight he told his beads in a low voice, giving thanks to God for a son so loving and so true. And when he had finished, he turned on his side and slept.

But before the light in the east wakened the martins to chatter 'neath the eaves, and roused the lark to shatter the rosy stillness with his matin song; before the sea took up its day-dream once more and whispered it to the red-brown rocks that leaned in the sand; he woke—not here, but in that far country where waiting is easy and weariness has no place.

For while the world lay wrapped in the dusk of summer dark, the blind man had gone out into the light.

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

NOTE.

The Terms to Subscribers having their Copies sent direct from the Office: Weekly Numbers, 10s. 10d. the Year, including postage; and Monthly Parts, 12s. 6d.

Post Office Orders should be made payable to ALBERT SEYMOUR, 12, St. Bride Street, Ludgate Circus, E.C.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 308.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISS KENDERDINE was dressing for the evening, and Miss Kenderdine was obviously out of humour. The maid sent by Mrs. Slade-Fenton to offer her services had felt her heart sink as her eyes rested upon the young lady's countenance; and her foreboding was amply justified by the events of the subsequent half-hour. Consideration for the servants was not the rule in the Slade-Fenton household. On the present occasion nothing that the maid did or said being right in Miss Kenderdine's eyes, the woman was informed of the fact at every opportunity with a careless, contemptuous insolence which was scornfully oblivious of the humiliation inflicted, and which seemed to serve as a safety valve for Miss Kenderdine's temper.

The result of the toilet was eminently unsatisfactory. The maid having been dismissed with a final cutting exposition of this fact, Miss Kenderdine confronted her own reflection in a long glass, and realised with a fresh access of ill-humour that she was very far from looking her best. Her commonplace, rather thin features, passable enough under the daring vivacity of expression which usually lighted them up, looked plain and unpleasant. Her brilliantly clad figure—rather too thin at the best of times—had a sullen set, and lacked that dash and assurance of carriage which was its dominant characteristic. She turned away from the glass with a quick, caustic gesture and a muttered ejaculation of indifference.

Mrs. Slade-Fenton was already in the drawing-room when Miss Kenderdine entered. She looked up as the younger woman came in; then her eyebrows moved sharply as she contemplated Miss Kenderdine for a second or two, and looked away again without comment.

The two ladies were dining alone; they were going afterwards to a very select little "at home," at which Dr. Slade-Fenton would join them. A week had elapsed since Mrs. Slade-Fenton's debating party.

Whether or no Miss Kenderdine would have made some slight attempt at the concealment of her humour had Dr. Slade-Fenton been present during dinner, is an open question. So far from making any such attempt for the edification of his wife, she seemed deliberately to display her ill-temper. Such contributions as she made to the conversation were brusque and captious in tone, and except when Mrs. Slade-Fenton's remarks demanded a response she sat in silence. After that first glance, Mrs. Slade-Fenton seemed to become entirely oblivious of anything unusual in her companion's appearance or manner. The presence of the servants necessarily prevented any allusion to it, and it was not until the two were seated side by side in the brougham, rolling rapidly along the streets, that the elder lady said warily:

"What is the matter, Olive?"

Miss Kenderdine, staring angrily out of her window, drummed impatiently upon the cushioned ledge.

"If you want to know, Helen, I've had enough," she said brusquely, almost defiantly.

"Enough of what?"

"Enough of—of playing a losing game. Oh, you know what I mean perfectly well, Helen. It's not worth the candle."

There was a note in her voice half angry, half contemptuous.

"You're speaking of Dr. Branston, I suppose?" said Mrs. Slade-Fenton with perfect composure. "He is a little difficult, certainly—that kind of man often is. But it is foolish to talk like that. I have said from the first—and you quite agreed with me, Olive—that he is just the man for you. His position is quite worth having even now; and in another ten years he will be at the top of the tree. What more do you want?"

"What he wants seems to be almost as much to the purpose," retorted Miss Kenderdine, with a laugh. "I don't believe he means to marry, Helen."

"He must marry," was the decisive answer. "It is absolutely necessary in his position, particularly if Ralph gets him into the practice. He'll soon find that out. And, if you don't get him, some one else will—that's all."

"Some one else may, then! He's too much trouble for me!"

The words were fired out with exceedingly spiteful emphasis, and Mrs. Slade-Fenton drew herself up and regarded her companion with sharp disapproval.

"Really, Olive," she said crisply, "you are talking like a child—and a very stupid child, too. Do you expect to get all you want in the world without taking trouble for it? Do you suppose that anything so obviously suitable as this is likely to present itself again in a hurry? I don't want to say unpleasant things, but you must really remember that you don't get any younger! You're very popular and attractive, of course. But still—popular women don't always marry."

Perhaps Miss Kenderdine's feelings had worked themselves off to some extent in her recent explosion; perhaps Mrs. Slade-Fenton's reasoning appealed to her common sense. The angry defiance of her pose relaxed a little; she leaned back in her place and said in a more argumentative tone:

"I'm quite as much annoyed as you can be, Helen. I rather like him, and he is so certain to get on. But, really, it doesn't seem to me to be good enough. I don't believe it's the faintest use."

"He behaves very well to you. He spoke the other night when you urged him to do so. Several people noticed you together, and asked me when it would be settled."

Miss Kenderdine laughed scornfully.

"Really, Helen," she said, "it is you who are foolish to use that as an argument when you are behind the scenes. As to his speaking, he only did it because it was less trouble than refusing."

"Give it another chance, at any rate," urged Mrs. Slade-Fenton emphatically. "See what happens to-night. Don't, pray, do anything foolish."

"I won't do anything foolish," returned Miss Kenderdine brusquely. "But I don't feel at all inclined to exert myself, and I tell you so frankly, Helen!"

Habit, as every one knows, is second nature. It was by no means Miss Kenderdine's habit to content herself with that very subordinate position in society which would have been hers but for her dashing and attention-compelling manners; and, ten minutes later, she was making one of a brilliant crowd in a brilliant drawing-room without a trace about her of that sullen ill-temper which she seemed to have put off with her cloak. The cloud had vanished from her face, and it was full of life and energy; her gesture and carriage were free and animated, and, if a caustic touch still lurked in her tongue, it only served to give an added flavour and originality to her talk.

She was the centre of a little group of more or less nervously delighted young men, when her quick eyes lighted on North Branston just entering the room. She nodded carelessly, and then, still talking and laughing, watched him without appearing to do so, as he moved through the room exchanging greetings and fragments of conversation until he came in due course to Mrs. Slade-Fenton. Then, after a moment or two, she saw him turn, evidently in response to a request from that lady, and make his way in her own direction.

Miss Kenderdine's expression grew rather hard, and she held out her hand as he approached with a brusque gesture.

"Good evening," she said, and there was a suggestion of perfunctoriness about the cordiality of her tone. "You've arrived just too soon, Dr. Branston. Oh, you've brought me my fan — thanks. All the same, you're a spoil-sport. We were overhauling the faults and follies of our acquaintances, and we were just coming to you."

She glanced carelessly round at her little group of listeners with a laugh.

There was something about North Branston's face: something which had developed almost imperceptibly as he moved through the crowd: something which strengthened

as he listened to Miss Kenderdine's flippant, biting tones, before which all such finer lines as the past year had left it seemed to sink into abeyance. There was a contempt about his mouth which was no longer the contempt which dismisses, but the contempt which subscribes to and accepts the thing scorned. His eyes were pitilessly observant of the woman before him, and their cynicism was that which has lost touch with cynicism's only excuse—a bitter sense of better things withheld or unattainable.

"I would not spoil such sport for the world. Shall I go away?" he said with careless irony.

"He had better stay and listen, Miss Kenderdine. It'll do him no end of good," put in a young man, laughing. And he added in an undertone to the man next him: "By Jove, he would hardly know himself by the time she had done with him!"

Miss Kenderdine ignored the suggestion, and addressed herself exclusively to North Branston.

"No," she said; "you needn't go. On the whole, I think we won't meddle with you. You're too beastly successful, as the boys say. Also, when it comes to saying nasty things of people, I rather admire you; you do it so well. So I think we'll make common cause."

"But if you come to fighting shy of the successful fellows, there's no fun in it," objected another man. "What's the good of taking off a fellow if he isn't worth taking off?"

Miss Kenderdine just glanced at him; but though she answered his question she practically addressed North Branston, and the group began to melt away.

"Dr. Branston is in the transition stage," she said. "Quite big enough to make the cutting up process unpleasant for the performer, and not quite bloated enough to be lazy about it. The transition stage will last a very short time, and then we shall be able to get our knives in."

She laughed spitefully, and then said, again with that perfunctory touch about her manner:

"How did the first lecture go off?"

North Branston had entered upon his duties in connection with his lectureship on the previous day.

"Oh, very well," he said callously, almost arrogantly. "Are you anxious to estimate its place in the bloating process, Miss Kenderdine? There was the usual amount of applause and the usual amount of congratulation, which is quite the right kind of food."

The rest of the group had drifted away, and the two were practically alone.

"It's part of the diet," returned Miss Kenderdine flippantly; "but taken alone it produces rather a temporary state of inflation. Coin of the realm is the outward and visible sign of success nowadays—it always has been, no doubt—and genuine success is not, where coin of the realm is not. An artistic success is the polite for failure. Don't flatter yourself that congratulations will go on for ever unless you show practical proofs of having deserved them."

North received the words with a careless gesture of assent.

"Financial proofs are obviously unimpeachable," he said, "and they have the further advantage of intrinsic charm."

Miss Kenderdine paused, and looked at him over her fan.

"I hope you take that fact into consideration," she said drily, and with a certain significance, "when you weigh the advantage of a ready-made practice."

North Branston did not resent the intrusiveness of the remark. He appeared to take it as the merest matter of course.

"You are an excellent woman of business, Miss Kenderdine," he said. "Don't do me the injustice to suppose——"

His voice, at its thinnest, hardest, and most cold-blooded, stopped suddenly. His glance, leaving Miss Kenderdine's face, had strayed indifferently enough across the room; and on the other side of the room something, presumably, of which he had caught a glimpse through the constantly shifting crowd, seemed to have arrested his attention. A curious expression—the expression of a man who finds himself, as with a flash and without volition on his own part, confronted with a violent contrast—passed across his face; he paused, the expression subsided, leaving his face slightly and indefinably altered; and he began his sentence again.

"Pray, don't imagine," he said, "that I should leave such a factor——"

His eyes had wandered again to that other side of the room where his attention had been caught before; and again he stopped. This time the movement of the crowd had made one of those open spaces which appear so unaccountably in the fullest room; and beyond it, sitting on a low seat pushed back into an angle of the wall, was Lady Karslake.

She was in black still; the sombre,

unrelieved black of mourning. But there was no other sign about her attire of her widowhood. She was listening to an elderly man who stood talking beside her; but she was not looking at him. She was fanning herself with slow, regular movements of a great black fan, and looking across it with a slight, hardly developed smile straight at North Branston. She met his glance and bowed.

North Branston returned her bow hurriedly, almost stiffly. Then he turned brusquely to his companion. His expression had developed. He looked like a man who, in the light of the contrast forced upon him, sees himself arraigned against his will.

"Have you had some supper, Miss Kenderdine?" he said. "May I have the pleasure of taking you down?"

"Who is your friend?" returned Miss Kenderdine coolly.

With one sharp glance at him she had followed the direction of his eyes, and was now staring—as perhaps only a woman of Miss Kenderdine's type can stare—at Lady Karslake. There was a moment's interval before North Branston answered.

"She is a Lady Karslake. You may have heard of her late husband, Sir William Karslake."

"Oh!" Miss Kenderdine prolonged her stare in silence for a moment, and then added carelessly: "Where have you met her?"

"At Alnchester," returned North curtly.

In spite of himself, in defiance, as it seemed, of his intentions, his eyes strayed once more as he spoke towards the slender, graceful figure on the other side of the room; and in that instant Lady Karslake smiled again, and made a little movement with her fan.

"She wants to speak to you apparently!" said Miss Kenderdine with an unpleasant laugh. Her expression had changed surprisingly in the course of the last few seconds.

"I have not had the pleasure of meeting Lady Karslake for two years," said North calmly. "Will you excuse me, Miss Kenderdine?" and he turned and made his way across the room.

Lady Karslake held out her hand, as he drew near, with a graceful little gesture of welcome.

"Well met!" she said. "I heard you were here, Dr. Branston. So you have taken my advice?"

He made a quick, non-committal movement, and met the clear eyes which were scanning his face with his own eyes sombre and impenetrable.

"It is very kind of you to remember me, Lady Karslake," he said, apparently for the sake of saying something.

She paused a moment, looking at him.

"Is that a pretty speech?" she said. "You have learned something in London, then!" She rose. "I was just going when I caught sight of you," she said. "Come and see me, Dr. Branston, will you? I'm in Wilton Street, number thirteen. Come to tea on Sunday, can you?"

"Thanks, I shall be delighted!"

She waited while he wrote the address in his pocket-book, and then held out her hand.

"Au revoir!" she said.

"Au revoir, Lady Karslake!"

THE MILITARY KNIGHTS OF WINDSOR.

I WONDER how many of the readers of ALL THE YEAR ROUND have heard of the Military Knights of Windsor, or, as they were more generally called in times of yore, the Poore Knights. For the information of those who are ignorant on the subject, I may mention in the first place that these Knights are retired military officers, to whom their Sovereign grants a pension and lodging in the Castle by way of provision for the declining years of those of her military subjects whose fortunes are not equal to their deservings; this institution for commissioned officers, in fact, forms a pendant to the better-known Chelsea Hospital for the veterans of the rank-and-file.

The establishment of the Military Knights of Windsor derives its origin from the illustrious King Edward the Third, and is closely connected with the Order of the Garter. On the simultaneous institution of both orders, each of the twenty-six Knight Companions of the Garter was allowed the right of presenting his Alms-Knight to the provision made for the latter by the King. Ashmole, and Camden in his "Britannica," speak of the establishment of these "Poore Knights" as "an imitation of the Prytaneum at Athens, the asylum of the Greeks for wounded or decayed soldiers who had deserved well of their country." The former historian adds that the evident intention of the Royal founder was "to provide for such military men or old soldiers as had served him bravely and

faithfully during his wars, as a remuneration for their past services, by providing them with an asylum in their declining years;" in the words of Edward's original grant, "such as through adverse fortune were brought to that extremity, that they had not of their own wherewith to sustain them, nor to live so genteely as became a military condition." Through the ecclesiastical governing body of the College of Windsor Castle they were assigned a pension equal to that enjoyed by the Canons of St. George's Chapel in the Castle, a proof of the high estimation in which the order was then held. Their individual allowances were forty shillings per annum, and, in addition, twelve pence each for every day they attended service in the chapel, attired in their quaint uniform of a long red mantle with a "scutcheon of St. George" on the shoulder thereof. If any Knight were absent without reasonable excuse, his allowance for the day was distributed among his companions.

Unfortunately, constant disputes arose between the Poore Knights and the Dean and Canons, who, as the former alleged, were in the habit of misappropriating and withholding the moneys due to them. In the twenty-second year of Edward the Fourth, the long-standing quarrel ended in a decisive victory for the clerical party, an Act being passed by which their adversaries were practically disestablished and sent adrift. The ostensible reasons for this proceeding were that the revenue of the Chapel was become insufficient to maintain the ecclesiastical members of the College of St. George, whose numbers had of late been greatly increased by the King, and that His Majesty had otherwise provided for the Alms-Knights. The real cause seems to have been that the Knights had formed the project of freeing themselves altogether from the rule of the Dean and Canons, and governing for themselves; a plan which was promptly nipped in the bud, as we have seen, by their opponents. "How they next subsisted," says the "Chronicle," "doth not fully appear;" but, being allowed to retain their lodgings in the Castle, they lived on as best they could; sending up petitions for a redress of their grievances to successive Kings, but without much avail, till as late as the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth. This monarch by his will set apart lands of the yearly value of six hundred pounds for the re-establishment of thirteen, instead of the original twenty-six, Poore Knights. It was not till the reign of Mary the First, however, that the work was begun by the building of new houses for their occupation on the south side of the lower ward of the Castle, consisting altogether of thirteen rooms, besides a common hall, wherein all dined together, a kitchen and pantry, etc. Elizabeth completed the work of her sister by nominating thirteen Knights, and by drawing up rules for their governance; expressly enacting that it should be the province of the Dean and Canons to enforce these, and thus once more subordinating the Alms-Knights to the ecclesiastical authorities. Among other orders the Queen commanded that candidates should be unmarried gentlemen who had served their Prince in time of war, of good character, but having little or nothing whereon to live. In later times, the essential rule that candidates should be of the military condition seems to have been disregarded. Among such cases we may instance that of a certain Monsieur Poté, whilom French master at Eton College, who was in the last century, probably by the interest of the governing body with the Sovereign, appointed a Poore Knight of Windsor, and whose remains now rest in the Chapel Precincts, under a tombstone testifying to his nationality and antecedents.

Elizabeth enacted that the Knights were "to have yearly for their liveries, each of them one Gowne of four yards of colour of red, and a mantle of blue or purple cloth of five yards, at six shillings and eightpence the yard; the Cross of St. George in a Scutcheon, embroidered without the Garter, to be set upon the left shoulder of their mantles; and the charges for the cloth, lining, making, and embroidering to be paid by the Dean and Chapter out of the revenues of the endowment given for that and other causes." They were forbidden to haunt the town, the alehouse, or the taverns; or to be without their lodgings or bring visitors home, unless by the leave of the Dean. The Governor of the Knights, chosen from their number, was, in his turn, to be obedient to the Dean and Chapter, and was responsible for the good behaviour of the rest; in consideration of which he received a somewhat larger pension than his companions. When the feast of St. George was kept at the Castle, as also at such times as the Sovereign should visit Windsor, the Knights were required to stand at their doors in uniform, to do their obeisance to the King and to the Knights of the Garter.

The above clearly defined and systematic method of government seems to have put an end to the quarrels and bickerings of former times, and henceforth the Knights passed their days in as much ease as was consistent with their scanty allowance. James the First, compassionating their proverbial poverty, was pleased to double their pay; and in the reign of Charles the First, five additional Knights were presented by the benevolence of Sir Peter Le Maire and his brother-in-law, Sir Francis Crane, the latter being Chancellor of the Order of the Garter. The five were allowed by the Sovereign to lodge near their companions against the west wall of the lower ward, where houses were built for them at Crane's expense.

In concluding this brief review of the ancient history of these veterans, it may be mentioned that Charles the First had formed the intention of making up their number to the original twenty-six, but found himself obliged to abandon his plan when overtaken by troublous times. During the reign of the Merry Monarch, a visit being paid to the Royal Chapel of St. George at Windsor by Samuel Pepys, he notes in his diary in somewhat disparaging tone "much bowing of the Poore Knightes to the altar." Possibly he had been a witness to the quaint old ceremony of investiture, still kept up, wherein the new-made Knight, supported by two others, bows thrice to altar, Dean, and Royal pew, marching up the chancel with slow and stately precision in the course of the special service appointed in the chapel prayerbook for that purpose.

Both the obligations and the privileges of the Military Knights of the present day are fewer in number than those of their predecessors. Their only duties now—certainly not very onerous ones—are to attend in full uniform at such Royal weddings or funeral rites as may be celebrated "Within the Precincts." By the way, the personages styled by Mrs. Oliphant, the authoress of the book whose name I have just mentioned, "the Chevaliers of St. George," —one of whom, a most humorous character, is the heroine's father—are generally conjectured to have been suggested, if no more, by the Military Knights.

Attendance at morning service in St. George's Chapel is no longer, as it used to be, compulsory. The pensions, now considerably increased, are paid quarterly by the Dean and Chapter, and as a reminder of the old connection between the two Orders, newly-invested Knights of the Garter pay a species of fee to the Military Knights on their appointment. When attending service uniform is worn, though not the flowing red and purple gowns of former days. William the Fourth, doubtless sympathising with the veterans, obliged to figure as grotesque memorials of a bygone age, ordered that the uniform worn by them should be changed to one nearly similar to that of the unattached officers of the army. This consists of red coat with swallow-tails and epaulettes, darkest blue trousers, cocked-hat with stately plume of red and white, crimson silk sash round the waist, and leather belt supporting a sword. The change is certainly for the better, and very gallant and warlike look the hale old officers, many with medals gained in the most famous of modern campaigns proudly displayed on their breasts; and great is the admiration and curiosity excited among the Sunday visitors to the Royal Chapel at the sight of the eighteen figures, brilliant in red and gold, forming a double line of bright colour amid the more sombrely attired worshippers. The rule that would-be Knights must be of a great age is now relaxed, though brasses on the Cloister walls tell us of Military Knights, of the last century and earlier, who have been interred there at the ages of eighty or even ninety years. One of these inscriptions on a copper plate let into the north wall of the quaint old Dean's Cloisters, runs as follows:

"Neere this spot lyeth the bodye of Captaine Richard Vaughan of Pantglas in the county of Carnarvon, who behaved himself with great courage in the service of King Charles the First (of ever blessed memory) in the civil warrs, and therein lost his sight by a shott, in recompence whereof he was in July, 1663, made one of the Poore Knights of this place, and died on the fifth day of June, 1700, in the eightieth yeere of his age."

Somewhat less of an ornament to his Order was the notorious Sir John Dinely, whose curious matrimonial advertisement "to the Ladies of England," in which he proposes to offer his worthy self as the prize in a species of lottery to the highest bidder, is so often quoted. Among the advantages of the union, Sir John, if I remember rightly, urges the dignity of his position as Military Knight; but it seems to have been the practical side of the question which struck Beau Brummel in later days, when, declining the barren honour of knighthood, he observed drily that

he would rather be appointed a Military Knight of Windsor, as he would then have the wherewithal to sustain his new dignity.

Sir John Dinely's advertisement proves that the old rule as to celibacy has long been abrogated; that of compulsory residence in the Castle exists still in slightly modified form. The veterans of the Royal foundation are still lodged in the old buildings of Mary's time (probably enlarged later) though they no longer dine in the common hall, now known as the Garter House. The Knights of the lower foundation—that of Sir Peter Le Maire—occupy the ancient Salisbury Tower, with other buildings, among which we may mention Henry the Eighth's Gateway, the principal public entrance to the Castle.

Till comparatively recent times, the Knights were yearly invited to a Garter Banquet on St. George's Day, in the hall in the Castle named after the patron saint of both Orders; but this old privilege has been withdrawn—perhaps the Royal present of game which yearly comes to each Poore Knight is intended as compensation for the dinner he has lost. Another right which was till of late years enjoyed by the veteran body, was that of a vote in the government of their country, but a few years ago a certain lynx-eyed Revising Officer of the other side—needless to say, the Military Knights were Conservative almost to a man—challenged their claim to the title of householders, and sustained his objection, since which date the Poore Knights have been voteless.

ON THE GULF OF MEXICO.

It was not by my wish, nor was it my fault, that I spent Christmas Day on board the "Beetle." Honestly, I cannot blame Captain Sapp for it either, though at the time I dearly wished I could make the whisky he drank, and therefore himself, responsible for the annoyance. No; it was that lazy, glaring Gulf of Mexico and its fit of cloudlessness—nothing else.

I had come to Cedar Key by a swinging express, with about eighty degrees of heat in the cars. Even the iced water on board was warm. Moreover, one of those sweet American children had dropped into the cistern a packet of nasty Chicago candies, the precipitated chalk of which they were mainly composed giving the thing the appearance of a sandy bottom, and the sugar making the fluid more of an emetic even than it would otherwise have been. We had a number of melting capitalists in the train, and some invalids who looked as if they yearned to expire without delay. In fact, I never was more pleased than when I could step forth upon the ugly marshland of Cedar Key, and get towards the city on foot. This part of the Gulf coast is something like the Lincolnshire Fens. But a fenny ague were preferable, on the whole, to a Florida fever.

Cedar Key is famous for its fish and oysters. A sociable northerner, who must have perspired away a stone of flesh since he left New York, took me by the arm when we had done with the cars, and told me about it. He calculated I should be ill-used if I didn't see six sorts of fish before me at every meal. They seemed to have borrowed their names from the rest of creation: sheepshead, catshead, pigshead, etc.—I rather think my friend mentioned asshead too.

It was all I could do to get loose from the sociable northerner. He assumed that I should join him in the "Suwannee Hotel," a big whitewashed house set squarely by what looked like a lot of sewage ooze. But I, on my part, calculated that I would look around a little before settling for the night. Besides, my schooner might wish to sheer off about sunset, which would suit me best of all. Far better, methought, to reach Anclote and a domestic atmosphere of Yuletide a day or two before the twenty-fifth, than to arrive perhaps in the middle of the Christmas Day service.

And so I meandered up the sandy streets, and admired Cedar Key's stores and the complexions of certain of its yellow girls. There's not a doubt about it: Florida agrees with these golden-skinned half-breeds better than it agrees with thorough-bred Anglo-Saxons. The latter soon get to look the colour of pale clay, whereas the former vie with a healthy lemon for brilliancy of hue. Just for the fun of the thing, I asked one of the damsels—she was attitudinising at the door of a green-shuttered house of one storey—if apartments were to be let at her place. But she soon settled me. "Mother's independent," she said. If I had given a seedy-looking millionaire a penny by mistake I could not have been repulsed with more scorn.

Ere I anchored at "Sea View Hotel" I had come to the conclusion that most other folks in Cedar Key were independent. The side-walks were thick with loungers, doing

nothing with the usual southern grace. But of course it was my ignorance that misled me. At the post office I read a very legible notice to the effect, "No idlers allowed in here." A little farther and I came to the office of the Tampa Steamship Company, on the wall of which was an illustrated placard. The picture represented a gallows and a man hanging from it with vilely contorted legs, and underneath were the words, "The death of dead-head. No dead-heads carried." Again, having left the steamship office, I passed a humble tailor's shop, in the poor window of which a single pair of mended pants were disposed on a string, and read the feeling request, "Please don't idle here."

I fear Cedar Key will never make a name in the world for energy. The soothing air of the Mexican Gulf, the abundance of fish and oysters in its waters, and the pleasant narcotic odour of cedar logs are all invaluable aids to "dolce far niente."

Finally, having wandered as far as possible from the centre of this home of unappreciated indolence, I obtained a bed at a building called Sea View House. Its unconventional look attracted me. It was stuck, so to speak, on the fringe of the Gulf: a single-storeyed bungalow with the westering sun on its windows, and with what I imagined at first to be a family bathing-machine rigged at the back of it on what, by a stretch of fancy, may be called the sea sands. These sands, however, were not at all a pretty colour, and they were studded with broken crockery, abandoned beef and other tins with jagged edges, which provoked a shudder at the thought of bathing in their vicinity. There was an odour here, too, but nothing to the odours elsewhere.

"A bed?" exclaimed the lean piece of energy who ran the house. "I guess so."

He showed me five rooms and I chose the one with the fewest holes in its walls and flooring, and the smallest spiders in its corners. I astonished the man by declining to sleep between sheets which were not clean. He grumbled at my insistence, but yielded to it, and subsequently hauled me over his premises to show me what a wonderful fellow he was. It did not surprise me a bit to learn that he was builder, boat-owner, fisherman, and oyster-dealer, as well as hotel-proprietor. I had met men of even more callings in his astounding country. What I had thought to be a bathing-machine proved to be his oyster shed. There were thousands of the dainties in it, and I consented to eat two or three there and then, the shells of which he obligingly knocked off for the purpose.

This settled, it behoved me to find out the "Beetle" and Captain Sapp. The hour was so late that I was assured no Cedar Key skipper was likely to set sail ere morning. But Captain Sapp himself—a red-nosed, hearty person with plenty of genial oaths on his tongue—told another tale. He was flooded with whisky, and vowed by two or three different things that a capful of wind would suffice for him. But he had a mate who winked while he spoke. I understood that wink. The sun might refuse to rise in the morning; it was even less probable that Captain Sapp would be in a condition to cast off the "Beetle" ere the morning.

Of the ship herself, I did not carry away an enthusiastic impression. She was small, and loaded very clumsily with boards and kegs of nails. Her cabin was just a hole with shut-up lockers along its sides. Even a dwarf could not have stood erect in it. And it smelt—well, mainly of what seemed to be butter that had become more than rancid.

"A snugger craft you'll not find nowhere, sir," said Captain Sapp, as he waved a tipsy hand over its nakedness. "I've had ladies here three nights and days, and they fairly enj'yed themselves."

I felt curiosity about those ladies, but said nothing, and went my way. It was arranged that should the best happen—adequate sobriety and a breeze—I was to be summoned from Sea View House, no matter at what hour, and sail would be set. But I looked at the flaming western sun, already dipped in the placid Gulf, and knew that I should sleep undisturbed in Cedar Key.

My fate was rather different. I paid for my audacity in patronising Sea View House. There were mosquitoes, and no conveniences for cheating them of their natural prey. That, however, I might have borne. There were worse things also. And most startling of all was the tumult of war that in the deadest of the dead hours awoke me under my bed. I never heard such weird noises, and for a minute or two lay, bathed in perspiration, casting about in my imagination for a reasonable theory to explain them. Suddenly it flashed to my mind. It was a fight between a cat and a rat. Two or three times there was a hot chase round the room, with bellicose squeakings on the part of the rat and tigerish little

growls from the cat. But the scene of war proper was always just beneath me. The combatants treated with perfect indifference my requests that they would change the field of battle. More than verbal protests I did not care to offer. Florida cats are as often as not half wild, with marked ferocity and courage, and very sharp claws. I had no notion of risking my toes by getting out of bed.

However, at length, comparative tranquillity was restored to me. I judged, rightly, that both cat and rat had vanished—whether of their own free will or not—through one of the sufficiently large holes in my flooring. Nor did I awake again until a new day, with no signs of a breeze, was upon the Gulf and Cedar Key. My landlord himself was civil enough to call me. He came into the room in his shirt-sleeves, with an oyster knife in one hand.

"You shall have a squeezing good breakfast," he said plaintively, "if you'll stop here instead of going up town."

For the life of me I couldn't guess what "a squeezing good breakfast" might be, but the meal he set before me included such marvellous variety as cold beef, veal and pork in joints, stewed corned beef, cabbage and potatoes, porridge, rice and hominy, hot cakes and common bread, maple syrup and marmalade, and three kinds of fish, caught at sunrise or thereabouts. Of the fish Master Sheepshead seemed to me the best. But really criticism were wasted upon such a coarse mass of viands.

There was an unfortunate youth in the hotel who entertained me with snatches of talk while I ate. He coughed as much as he talked, and was swathed in blankets to the chin. I gathered that he was the only son of a doting northern father whom he had persuaded to send him south for his health "on the off chance." The poor fellow's lungs were far gone. That, however, did not interfere with his appetite. He viewed the table luxuries with a rolling eye of desire, and confided to me that so long as he could "peck well" he didn't want to die.

It was now the twenty-third of December, and I made my way to the jetty feeling a little anxious. The preposterous Gulf was like a sheet of brass. I chanced upon Captain Sapp and his pipe in the yard of a neighbouring sawmill. He was arranging for a few more cubic feet or yards of planking.

"Oh, yes, we'll manage it somehow," he remarked, when I mentioned the existing packed condition of the deck. He hadn't much faith in a breeze this day either. "Though to-night, sir," he added, with a fine cheery affectation of assurance, "you may go 'nap' on it."

The worst idler of Cedar Key was not in it with me for six or seven hours of this unappropriated twenty-third of December. I yawned and perspired, and sat here and stood there, and strolled from bar room to bar room, and gossiped freely with the yellow girls, and stared stolidly at the pair of mended pants in the tailor's shop, and thought of nothing all the time. I declare it is rather a pleasant mode of life. There's not a particle of worry in it; nor does it diminish one's appetite. I ate my dinner in one of the hotels, with a long-haired man from Texas, who tried to lure me into such a monstrous effort of energy as a game of billiards with him.

"Jes' to pass time," he said, pleadingly.

I assured him I had learnt the knack of passing time to my entire contentment.

The later hours of the afternoon I spent on the "Beetle," losing all the profit of my earlier indifference in a gradual passion of impatience with the Gulf of Mexico. I had Trollope's "Autobiography," at twenty cents, in my hand, and a cedar log to loll on. I had also the solace of society in Nick, the "Beetle's" mate. Nick said Captain Sapp was in town, which meant whisky. And he told me many diverting lies about his seafaring career while he smoked my cigarettes, one after the other, just as a boy sucks jujubes.

There was other solace round about if I had been in the humour to enjoy it. A couple of smacks were unloading oranges from Tampa. Ten little nigger boys were the instruments employed, and it ought really to have been interesting to watch their smartness and mark the air of unbounded frivolity which possessed them while they worked. The youngsters sang a multitude of the current comic songs, with suitable gleaming of white teeth and not a little action. On the pier edge close by sat a row of black girls admiring the black boys. The damsels dangled attractive black toes over the unrippled water, and pretended to be fishing for shiners. But they were of course fishing for masculine notice instead. I saw it in their languishing looks, and in the ease with which the hooked shiners regained their liberty. And I heard it in their tremulous remarks to each other about the beauty of Billy Pugh's

curly hair, and Seth Tompkins's lovely expressive black eyes with the beautiful yellowish whites in them. But Billy Pugh and Seth Tompkins were at that moment yelling "Over the Garden Wall" with frightful disregard of harmony and the most perfect contempt for the love-lorn maidens sighing towards them.

"This," I said to Captain Sapp at five o'clock, "is getting beyond a joke. I'm going up town for my supper."

But the mariner dissuaded me. He felt something or other in his blood which indicated a breeze. It was the first time I had heard of a connection between whisky and the wind. However, I said nothing. And at six o'clock I consented to sit among the planks and the furniture on the "Beetle's" deck and join the captain, Nick, and a long-legged fellow who had earned a dollar and a half by shoving things about for two hours, over a dirty frying-pan, which held the ship's evening meal. Nick gave me a fork because I was a passenger.

After supper the sun set in the usual theatrical way, with a fine flourish of afterglow tints. But there wasn't enough wind to lift a feather, much less push a sail.

"Why do you call your boat the 'Beetle'?" I asked Captain Sapp at ten o'clock—"because she's so slow?"

"Now, sir," said he, with—as well as I could make out in the starlight—a grim smile, "don't lose your temper. Be advised by me friendly, and turn in for an hour or two instead of pacing that eternal jetty."

My mood induced me to clasp the captain by the hand and apologise for my peevishness. He almost melted into pathos as he begged me not to mind him. He had a wife or something of the kind down Anclote way who would be sadly put out if he didn't get to her by Christmas morning. So far, therefore, we were fellow sufferers. But he understood, he said, how particularly I, as "a Britisher fresh out from England," must feel annoyed at such a steady spell of inaction.

We smoked another cigar apiece in brooding silence. Then I turned in and learnt by the light of the cabin's lamp why the ship was called the "Beetle." As I lay on my back on the hard wooden seat, I viewed an endless procession of cockroaches along the wooden ceiling about ten inches from my face. What they were doing I know not to this day, but they moved with the precision of trained troops. The lamp light shone on their burnt-sienna bodies, and troubled them not.

At three o'clock I was again on the jetty. I did not so much mind the beetles, even when they lost their balance and fell on me, but a rat across my neck when I was dozing took the ardour out of me.

Florida days in winter may be the idyllic experiences descriptive writers tell us they are; but I, for my part, do not think much of Florida nights. As for the State in summer, I prefer not to try it. I remember with a thrill the words of a one-legged New Yorker who talked to me on the subject. He had been born in "the bottom State," and lived there five-and-twenty years.

"What's it like, sir?" he exclaimed, echoing my enquiry. "Well, sir, if I was axed serious which I'd sooner go to for the climate, Florida or hell, I'd take time to think it over."

I do not wish to disparage the land of oranges; but I feel impelled to be truthful about it, that is all.

But to return to the Cedar Key jetty. When I had strolled about for many minutes listening to the crowing of the city cocks, who proclaimed the dawn a little before its time, it seemed to me I felt a breath of air. I reflected that it was already Christmas Eve, and Anclote was still seventy miles away. And so I called up the captain.

Yes, there was the beginning of a breeze, sure enough. We got the sails up and slowly moved off. And when we had gone about two miles we stood still and beheld the sun rise. A more moving spectacle I have seldom seen, but if only it had helped to move us it would have been so much more welcome.

A day of utter tedium ensued. One hour we would creep along half a mile, and then for two hours our sails just curled themselves round the masts and went to sleep. At noon Cedar Key was still conjecturable, and we were still in the shallow water which lies for miles from the shore, itself here so flat that it is hardly separable by vision from the water that laps it.

We had a propelling pole with us, and by the aid of this humiliating object we moved a few yards at times. But it seemed too absurd, and so we dropped it. Thrice in the day we three met formally over the frying-pan in which fish and potatoes were cooked by Nick. We picnicked among the planks and furniture, and the sun's heat kept our entrée frizzling long after it had left the pan.

At Captain Sapp's invitation I now and again looked at the two or three other sails in

the distance, as futile as our own, and felt a wicked joy in their purposelessness. Perhaps there were people on board those boats also who had arranged for a happy Christmas, which was to be denied them.

Nick, having smoked all my cigarettes, fell to confidences about his home life. He had a dear old mother somewhere whom he had not seen for twelve years, in fact since he had taken to the sea.

"I allers think of her," he said, "when I've nothing else to do."

"But why don't you go and see her?" I asked severely.

"She may be dead, you know," the idiot answered inconsequently. "I kinder like to think of her as she was when she used to cuff an' kiss me. I was a ter'ble bad boy, I was, and that was why I run away. She'd be sixty-one next Janiwary. I've lost a thumb since I sloped."

"That wouldn't make much difference," I urged.

"No, I guess she'd know me fast enough. But I'm not going home jes' yet," he replied dreamily.

Evening came and found three exceedingly morose persons on board the "Beetle." It was of course a lovely night. I stared at the pale saffron and green tints in the sky after sundown, and tried to admire them long after the stars had succeeded them. I also convinced myself that I was in luck to have so placid an opportunity of studying stellar reflections. But it would not do in the long run. Christmas Eve was fast hastening towards Christmas Day. This nightmare voyage, which ought to have been achieved in six or seven hours, seemed likely to drag on into the New Year.

We had more fish, and bread, and potatoes, for supper, with a fluid called coffee to help them down. Then we arranged ourselves on the planks under the stars, and at Captain Sapp's request, backed by his mate's, I told them some Christmas stories. That was reversing the proper order of things. But the "Beetle's" crew had not seen much of the world, and they confessed gladly that of all uneventful waters the Gulf of Mexico was, in their opinion, the most uneventful. They enjoyed few storms. One voyage on it differed only from another in the number of days or hours they respectively exacted.

A night among the roaches followed—a sweltering night productive of aches and pains. Not a breath of air stirred. There was no sound. Even the vessel in all its manifold parts seemed to have gone to sleep. When periodically I stretched my wearied bones on deck, I saw stars and a pallid gleaming expanse of water smooth as a sheet of tin. It was not at all stimulating.

And so Christmas Day arrived, with the red sun and a continuance of immobility. We wished each other the compliments of the season somewhat sardonically. That ribald brute Nick opened his mouth with a verse of "Hark, the herald angels sing!" and would have gone through the hymn had we not sternly sentenced him to the galley, where he was to make us a cake.

At ten o'clock another mendacious breeze arose. It carried us for five miles at a spanking pace and then left us. There was a Key West sponging schooner a mile or two from us, and this craft, with sundry porpoises, were the sole incidents of the hours of daylight. The porpoises were most irritating creatures — they made so frantic a mock of us in the speed at which they turned somersaults. As for the spongers, they could be seen tugging at their booty with their long poles just as if it had been a common week-day.

The most appalling feature of the day was the emptiness of the larder. There was no baker's bread left, and we had eaten all the fish. Nor was there an ounce of butcher's meat, either tinned or in joints. Captain Sapp and the whisky together had put us in a hole. And on Christmas Day, too, of all days!

While Nick mixed his cake, therefore, we were obliged, for our lives' sake, to catch something. After an anxious three hours we did manage to haul in a couple of silver and black fish, weighing about four pounds in their bones. This was our Christmas dinner.

As for the cake, which deluded us into high hopes with its appetising perfume, it proved a mere quagmire.

"You're a fair hand at navigating the 'Beetle,'" said Captain Sapp to his mate; "but you're a blamed bad one at cakes."

From its flavour this particular cake—so called—had about forty per cent. of soda in it. Doubtless we should have eaten it with avidity on the fourth or fifth day of our voyage; but we were not at present reduced to such an extremity.

The most pleasing element of our Christmas dinner of fish and potatoes was the tobacco which followed it. Captain Sapp then told of a December camp-out he once enjoyed in a Florida Key, when they ate wild turkey, venison, and duck stew three

times daily, with oranges and sugar-cane for dessert.

"Yes," said Nick, "but you hadn't no plum pudding. I don't calc'late it was proper Christmas feeding if there weren't no plum pudding."

"I forgot the puddings," explained the captain promptly. "We had four, in tins; Chicago made, with the words 'Plum pudding of Old England' on them in red letters, and a Union Jack for a trade mark. I mind the brandy taste to them."

This was the crowning touch. There was no cheapening such an experience.

The idea occurred to me of lowering the boat and rowing to the sponger for some provisions. But the boat was charged to the gunwale with planking and other rubbish. Besides, it had, Captain Sapp affirmed, two boards out of its bottom, and there were no oars.

Towards evening another gust of air blew up from the west. It seemed a farce, for, at the best reckoning, we could not hope to use it so as to reach Anclote before midnight. But for all that we welcomed every puff of it we could catch, and Captain Sapp, stirred by elation, descended into the ship's hold and reappeared with a small box of sweet biscuits—crackers, he called them. It would have done you good to see how we brightened over those sugar-clad dainties.

"I've pinched them from Reuben Whittick's case, Nick," the captain said with a wink.

I don't know anything about Reuben Whittick, but I feel sure if that worthy settler of Hernando County could have seen how we relished this small sample of his goods, he would have forgiven us the petty larceny.

And so anon Nick and I went almost wistfully to our little prison downstairs, and lay on our backs on its respective sides. We had the steady rush of water about the ship's hull for a lullaby, and the roaches on their eternal trot served to soothe the eyes into somnolence. I took the precaution before dropping off to cover my face with my handkerchief. The mate, less scrupulous, paid for his indifference. He woke with a bellow in the middle of the night, and spent a tumultuous minute or two in disengaging a roach from his gullet.

"If you will sleep with your mouth open you know what to expect on board the 'Beetle,'" said Captain Sapp unsympathetically.

The ship still moved, though lazily. Of cloud in the starlit heavens there was not a speck. And the air was as sultry as if it were warmed all round us by fires of coal.

But my next awaking was one of deep pleasure. I tumbled up into the daylight, curious about the exaggerated noises which wailed and cried throughout the "Beetle"; and there I met Captain Sapp's roseate countenance. Engrained felicity beautified it as much as the pipe between his lips.

"We'll be in Anclote by breakfast," he said, as he nodded at the white rage of water in our wake. "We're making ten knots, and there's the Anclote Keys."

He pointed to some wooded islets ahead of us seawards.

"Eight knots'll be more like it," remarked the mate.

"You go to blazes with your eight knots," cried the captain. "You're no more of a hand at reckonings than at Christmas cakes."

But Nick, with a composed smile, having fixed the tiller, went down below instead, and, reappearing with the fishing-line, concentrated his energy on the most useful purpose open to him. He hadn't much faith in the captain's prophecy about breakfasting in Anclote.

And Nick was right. The fish he caught had to carry us on till noon. By then, most happily, our trials of patience were at an end. We had stranded several times in the mouth of the Anclote river, and been reduced to the curious necessity of getting out and pushing the "Beetle" off the shallow shellac bottom.

Anclote jetty at last. Two small boys with their hands in their pockets and a lean lath of an adult in a planter's hat stood stolidly watching our cautious approach to them.

"Yes, sonny," cried Captain Sapp, in reply to a shout from one of the boys. "Your mammy's right, we are late."

Then the good mariner turned to me and offered me his horny hand in farewell.

"We'll be having you back soon, I suppose?" he enquired gaily.

Nick the mate also waited my reply.

But I temporised. In my heart I swore a mild oath that nothing except the sudden submersion of the seventy miles of land between Anclote and Cedar Key should induce me to put myself again at the mercy of the "Beetle" and the Mexican Gulf.

"MR. MORTIMER."

A COMPLETE STORY.

On a certain afternoon in July, now more years ago than I care to remember, I stood upon the departure platform at

Paddington, with a restless and excited crowd of mortals on the move hurrying and surging around me. I myself stood still and impassive as a maypole, yet, in all probability, not one out of every hundred of the people bumping against me and against one another felt a perturbation of spirit as tempestuous as mine. Their hearts, forsooth, were merely filled with desire to get upon the river, or to some Friday to Monday haven of rest from City cares, while mine was heaving and burning with the great passion of my life. In other words I had just fallen in love for the first time.

I was in love, but that was not all, or the worst. I had indeed—as I told myself in my more sanguine moments—some legitimate grounds for hope, but there had recently come to my ears tidings of a rival hovering near, a rival who might prove dangerous if I did not hurry up; and, as I stood half bemused on the platform, I was tormented by a horrible doubt whether any hurrying up on my part would be of any use to win for me the girl of all the world, or, indeed, whether I ought to let my thoughts dwell upon her and her excellences a moment longer. My doubt was not with regard to her favourable consideration. I did not fear her father's opposition to my suit, for I had that moment in my pocket a letter from him, bearing a most friendly invitation from him to spend a day or two of my holiday at his place at Shepperton, an invitation I determined, after great searchings of heart, to decline. My doubt was of a more practical nature, one concerned with ways and means, arising from the consideration whether an income which I found at present just enough for one, could be stretched out to serve the needs of two or more. If the old gentleman should be disposed to come down with three hundred a year or so, all would be well, but there was a strain of prudence—some people may call it cowardice—in my nature which made me recoil from the thought of taking the irretrievable step, and finding that forty pounds a year for pin-money was the amount of his benefaction. I may add that, from what I had seen of Mr. Copthall and his ways, I considered the latter-named sum to be much more likely to be fixed than the former. I was, indeed, very fond of Muriel, and I hesitated to take any step which might subject her, to say nothing of myself, to a life of domestic cheese-paring. Yet, if I didn't make a move of some sort, this other lover might, and the man who speaks first has always points in his favour.

I hurried into a compartment just as the train was on the move, and settled myself in the helter-skelter fashion which always follows such culpable delay. What had become of my bag I knew not. I thrust a bundle of sticks, umbrellas, and fishing-rods into the rack over my head, and flung my travelling literature on the seat in front of me; but before applying myself to the perusal of any of this, I took out of my pocket the letter from Muriel's papa and read it again, and once again, wondering the while whether I should ever see that commercial-looking signature of his at the foot of a satisfactory marriage settlement.

Upon entering the carriage, I had been dimly conscious that in it there was one other traveller besides myself, but I was too much flustered to remark aught of him except the fact that he occupied the seat in the carriage most remote from mine. When I looked up after reading my letter, I was surprised to find that he had shifted his position, and was now seated beside me. I was at first inclined to resent this approach on his part as a great intrusion, but when my eye met my companion's, his face brightened into such a kindly smile that all my ill-humour vanished. Silence was soon broken by the stranger.

"I have to apologise to you most humbly, sir," he began, "for a most unpardonable breach of manners. Just now, as I was moving over to this seat, I chanced to catch sight of the name at the foot of the letter you were reading. I trust you will forgive me."

I bowed, and uttered some inarticulate sounds which were meant to signify to the stranger that he might consider himself pardoned, whereupon he continued:

"You are very good, but I have yet another favour to beg of you, which is to tell me whether my worthy friend Joshua Copthall is quite well."

I started with surprise as the stranger uttered Mr. Copthall's name, and, turning a sharp glance upon him, I proceeded to take stock of him. He was an exceedingly neat and well-groomed gentleman, with everything handsome about him. His clothes, his boots, and his umbrella, bore the stamp of the first-rate shop, and the few bits of jewellery he displayed were costly and in the best taste. From what he had said, Mr. Copthall was apparently a friend of his; but from his general aspect and belongings, I was disposed to attribute to him a social level several degrees above that occupied by my father-in-law "in

posse," or by the guests I had met at Shepperton. As soon as my astonishment allowed me the free use of my tongue, I replied that Mr. Copthall, when I last saw him, was in excellent health.

"That's right, that's right," said my companion heartily. "Joshua and I were boys together—happy boys. We rarely meet now, but that is not my fault, for I—as I dare say you may have perceived already—am of an effusive nature, while Jos is reserved, very reserved. You may perhaps have noticed that fact as well."

I replied that I thought I had remarked this characteristic in our common friend. Indeed it now struck me that Mr. Copthall had always been exceedingly reticent as to his private affairs. I knew that he was "in the City," but I knew nothing else about him. Presently my companion went on:

"Yes, he is reserved, very reserved. Now, you seem to be on intimate terms with him, but I don't suppose he has ever let you have any inkling as to the extent of his operations."

"Indeed, he has not," I replied. "Indeed, I—I——"

"Just so, just so," the stranger broke in; "you know nothing about his doings, and I'm not surprised; but would you be surprised to hear that he is one of the biggest financial operators of the day?"

"I confess I have never thought of him as occupying such a position," I remarked, pricking up my ears somewhat.

"Of course you haven't. Jos is close, very close. He doesn't like to let the world know that he is a man with an income of five figures, and perhaps he is right, perhaps he is right."

My heart gave a great bound as I listened. Could this speech I had just listened to be true, seeing how utterly at variance its tenor was with the character of the ménage at Shepperton? At first I decided that it could not, but then there came the comforting thought that the limited scale of his housekeeping might be the outcome of Mr. Copthall's eccentric reserve, and I began straightway to set him down as just the man who would try to pose as a man of modest means, being all the while a millionaire.

My companion went on:

"And I'll be bound he hasn't told you about that tremendous coup he made in financing the San Domingo and Honduras submarine telegraph, or about the quarter of a million he netted over the conversion of the Terra del Fuego ten per cents."

"But," I interfered, not wishing to seem too easily convinced, "Mr. Copthall lives very simply and quietly, and, to tell the truth, I have noticed in his household certain small economies which—in short, are you quite certain that all the operations he has undertaken have turned up trumps?"

"Trumps, do you say, my dear sir? I believe you!" said my companion with a beaming smile, "aces, kings, queens, knaves, and any other court cards you can think of. And as to those little economies you have alluded to, they are common foibles with rich men. Did not the late Baron Mortara collect orange peel as he walked about the city, and dispose of it to an eminent firm of marmalade makers, realising thus about a penny farthing a month? Are there not instances by the thousand of parsimony co-existing with great wealth?" Here my companion began to talk rather discursively concerning the quasi misers he had known; and in the midst of a somewhat lengthy digression, he caught sight of my fishing-rod in the rack above my head, a discovery which set him going on quite a new tack. "Ah, you are an angler," he cried, "so am I. Indeed, I may say I know as much about fishing as most men." I was more than a little annoyed at this diversion, for I knew by bitter experience the boring capabilities of the enthusiastic fisherman when fairly started on his hobby, and I had not yet heard nearly all I wanted to hear about Mr. Copthall and his financial operations. I saw, however, that I should do no good by pulling up my companion suddenly, so I let him have his head for a bit.

"Ah, but that was many years ago," he said by way of winding up an anecdote. "And so you are off fishing. Lucky man. I can't offer to go with you, I wish I could; but if you haven't fixed on a place yet, I'll tell you the best angling centre within fifty miles. Go to Belford station on the Woolborough branch line, and put up at the 'White Hart.' Three miles of superb fishing, and not a soul to trouble you at this time of year; and just above is my friend Cuthbert's preserved water—five miles more. Take my card and call upon him, and if he doesn't give you leave, and ask you to dinner as well, he isn't the man I take him to be."

The gentleman brought forth a card from a smart silver card-case, and handed it to me. "Mr. Mortimer" was the name I read, without any address thereto. The offer he had just made me was really a very

friendly one, and, coupled with the information he had given me concerning Mr. Copthall and his affairs, caused me to set him down as the most valuable travelling companion I had ever met in the whole course of my life.

I had taken my fishing-rod with me on this journey more from the force of habit than with any definite idea of fishing. In the tumult of my emotions, I had found myself quite incapable of making any plan for my holiday, beyond settling first to go to Banbury, where lived an uncle of mine to whom a duty visit was owing. But the half-hour I had spent in the railway carriage with Mr. Mortimer had, by the new light which it had thrown on Mr. Joshua Copthall's worldly circumstances, in a measure transfigured my universe. I began to get more nervous about that threatening rival. I found I loved Muriel ever so much more dearly than I had hitherto imagined, and I determined that to live without her would be impossible. My first impulse was to get out of the train at the next stoppage, and go back to London and lay my heart at the dear girl's feet forthwith, but I remembered that she had gone on a visit to Scarborough, and I resolved to keep to the rudimentary programme I had framed; to go and pay my visit to my uncle at Banbury, and then make for the angling paradise of which I had just heard, where, in the intervals of sport, I would concoct and put in writing the letter which I fancied might secure my future happiness as effectively as any personal appeal.

I sat silent over these weighty ponderings several minutes, and during this interval Mr. Mortimer moved back to his original place, and began to occupy himself with a heap of parcels which I had not before noticed on the seat in front of him. One of these he unrolled enough to let me see that it was a very pink-cheeked, flaxen-haired wax doll. Another he disentangled entirely from its envelope, and this proved to be a large kaleidoscope. Mr. Mortimer was apparently bent on testing its merits thoroughly, for he fixed it to his eye and kept turning it round and round with a smile of delight spread over his countenance. I coughed, and even ventured on a casual remark to attract his attention, for I was anxious to draw him once more into conversation on the subject of his old schoolfellow, but he seemed to find the prismatic designs he was contemplating more attractive than my society.

At last Mr. Mortimer put down his kaleidoscope and began to wrap it up carefully in brown paper. Doubtless the parcels he had with him were presents for nephews and nieces—for there was something about him more suggestive of the model uncle than of the paterfamilias. The moment seemed propitious, so I began:

"You were saying a few minutes ago about our friend Mr. Copthall——"

"I didn't say this was a beastly railway, did I?" interrupted Mr. Mortimer, with more irritation in his manner than I had heretofore remarked. "If I did I wasn't far wrong. I travel by this train every Friday, and it is always late. Ah, here we are, Rogley Road at last." And as he spoke, Mr. Mortimer began to bustle about and gather his parcels together. "Good-bye, sir, good-bye, and don't forget what I told you about keeping your feet dry."

The train stopped and Mr. Mortimer got out. Any doubts I may have had about his social position were at once dispelled by the appearance at the carriage door of a valet of the correctest type. He took charge of all Mr. Mortimer's parcels and belongings, and I saw them get into a neat brougham which was waiting outside the station.

I never knew time to go by so pleasantly in a railway carriage as it went during the residue of my journey to Banbury. I cannot now recall half the golden dreams I dreamt, or the fairy castles I built. When I alighted on the platform at Banbury I seemed to be walking on air. That evening I ate and drank of the best inn's best, and the next morning drove out to see my uncle, who lived in a pretty little house about a couple of miles outside the town. He seemed so genuinely glad to see me that I stayed three days with him, and the evening before I left I first wrote and then posted with my own hands that fateful letter to Muriel.

When I took leave of my uncle to go in search of Mr. Mortimer's fishing inn, he bade me come again to visit him on my way back, and not forget to bring a basket of fish with me. I accepted his kind invitation willingly, for I had made up my mind, in any case, to await my fate at Banbury, and had asked Muriel to address her reply to me at the hotel. The distance to be covered between Banbury and Belford was not great, and a crow might have flown thither and back many times in the two hours and forty minutes it took me to accomplish the journey; but all journeys

come to an end, even on the branch lines of Wessex. I was the sole passenger to alight at Belford, and when I looked round upon the circumjacent country, I was a little surprised to find it was bare upland. I then remembered that railway stations are often placed some distance from the places which give them their name, and decided that Belford must be one of them. But a fresh surprise awaited me when, having asked the porter who took my ticket whether there was any means of getting any things taken to the "White Hart," I was informed by him that there was no such house of entertainment in these parts. "At least," he added, "if there wur I think I should know on it."

I then asked him to tell me the nearest point on the river, whereupon, with a glance at my fishing tackle, he answered with a large smile that "there warn't no river nowhere about there. There wur one down Oxford way, he knew, cos he had seen it hisself." An enquiry for Mr. Cuthbert met with no better fate. No such gentleman lived anywhere in the region of Belford.

By this time I was in a state of puzzled anger. Could I have mistaken Mr. Mortimer's directions? I looked at the scrap of paper on which I had jotted them down. No, I had followed them to the letter. I grew more and more perplexed, and then I remembered suddenly how Mr. Mortimer had told me he was himself an angler; and anglers, as all the world knows, are greedy, envious fellows, ever ready to throw their brother craftsmen on the wrong scent. Doubtless there was, somewhere near Rogley Road, some favourite stream of his which he feared I might be making for, and on this account he had framed this cock-and-bull story to send me off on a wild goose chase. To add to my confusion the porter informed me there was no inn anywhere near where I could lodge for the night, and I found by consulting the time-table that I could not get back to Banbury. There was a train due, he added, in about an hour's time which would take me to Shipley Junction, where—as he had heard tell—there was a "Railway Hotel."

I slept that night at Shipley Junction, and on the following day succeeded in making the journey to Banbury, occupying myself en route by putting together certain cutting speeches to be used on Mr. Mortimer should I ever chance to meet him again. My uncle was surprised to see me back so soon, and chaffed me unmercifully on account of the hoax I had suffered at the hands of my late travelling companion, counselling me at the same time to go in search of that gentleman and demand an explanation of his conduct, advice which jogged exactly with my existing humour, notwithstanding the fact that I am by no means aggressive or pugnacious by nature. Then it suddenly came into my recollection how Mr. Mortimer had let drop the remark that he travelled by the train in which we had foregathered every Friday, wherefore I resolved that, on the following Friday, I would be at Rogley Road to meet him.

When the train drew up at the platform on the day in question, I was on the platform. I watched it as it came slowly alongside, and was a little surprised to see Mr. Mortimer's valet leaning out of the window with an anxious look on his face, and signalling to the driver of the brougham, which, as before, was waiting outside. One of the porters, too, catching sight of these demonstrations, ran along the platform and was by the carriage door when the train came to a stop.

The valet first descended, and then carefully helped Mr. Mortimer out, an attention which was apparently distasteful to the latter, for he resented it with petulant gestures and indistinct mutterings. As I approached he seemed to grow calmer, and a broad benignant smile overspread his countenance; but he gave not the least sign that he had ever seen me before. I was just going to address him when the porter, who apparently quite realised the situation, placed himself on Mr. Mortimer's other side and, together with the valet, convoyed him to the brougham, which he was induced to enter after some difficulty. Then the porter mounted guard at the brougham door, while the valet returned to the platform to fetch some parcels, and, having encountered the station-master, he held with that official a colloquy which I perforce overheard.

"Governor a little on the scoop to-day, Mr. Robins?" said the station-master.

"Rather," answered the valet; "he was as right as the mail when we started, but as we were going down Regent Street he saw a young lady, as he thought, was struck with love of him at first sight, and after that there was no holding him."

"Ah, they're all like that sometimes, ain't they? I never saw him better than he was last week."

"You may say that; he was that sensible

and quiet that I let him travel down with another gent all by himself, and he told me afterwards how he had found out that the gentleman's godfather was an old schoolfellow of his. Lord! there's nothing he likes so well as to get hold of a stranger and stuff him up with tales of this sort."

"Well I never. Ah, if he didn't do nothing more outlandish than play games o' this sort, you'd have an easier time than you have, wouldn't you, Mr. Robins?"

"I reckon I should; but we must take the rough with the smooth. Good night, Mr. Walker." And with these words the valet turned away to release the porter from his guard at the door of the carriage. He got in, and the carriage drove rapidly off.

This conversation did not last more than a minute, but that minute was assuredly one of the most emotional I ever passed. Was I standing on solid ground, or was the earth melting away beneath my feet, and letting rush into ruin and destruction the foundations of that magnificent castle of fancy I had been constructing during the past week? Who was Mr. Mortimer? What was he? How much of truth was there in the interesting details he had given me during our journey down to Rogley Road last week? Was his discourse concerning Mr. Joshua Copthall any more closely allied to fact than his discourse concerning the Belford fishing?

All these pressing questions cried out to be answered at the same time, and I felt that I should never know a moment's peace till they should be answered one way or the other. I looked up and saw the station-master at leisure; so I approached him and said:

"Can you inform me whether the gentleman who has just driven off in the brougham which was waiting is—is——"

"A little off his head you would say, sir," said the station-master in a cheery voice. "Well, yes, he is. He comes from Dr. Clasper's private establishment on the hill there. Some people make as if they are afraid of him, but, Lord bless you, he's as harmless as a child, and a lot better every way since the doctor has let him go up to London once a week with his keeper."

I can recall nought but a blurred recollection of my journey back to Banbury. When I arrived at my destination I wandered aimlessly to the hotel, but scarcely had I crossed its threshold when something happened which woke me up effectually enough. This was the delivery to me by the waiter of a letter addressed to me in a handwriting which I knew at once to be Muriel's; and when, in the profound solitude of the coffee-room, I opened it, I laughed derisively, sardonically, hysterically, as you will, but the fact remains that I laughed.

Of course the dear girl would be mine. Alas, in what a different spirit should I have read this announcement had I not gone on my late expedition to Rogley Road. Then at least ignorance would have given me a few hours of bliss. But when I read Muriel's letter through a second time, and realised the fact that a very lovely, amiable girl confessed therein that she loved me, I felt I was giving way to unworthy despondency. Perhaps the old gentleman, without being the Crœsus of Mr. Mortimer's imagination, might be comfortably off, after all; perhaps—but what was the scrap of paper which now fluttered down to the ground from the folds of Muriel's letter?

I opened it and read:

"My dear Boy,—God bless you both. I can say no more. I always think there is no lover to match the one who will take a girl for herself alone. Still, I cannot stifle a regret that my dear daughter must go to you empty-handed. Six months ago I had a nice little sum put aside which would have been very respectable pin-money for her, that is according to the standard of folks in our class, but this sum, my only savings, has all gone in paying calls on the shares I unfortunately held in the Anglo-Antipodean Bank at the time when that institution had to undergo the process known by the name of reconstruction. But, as the money is gone, repining is useless. I am duly grateful for the ray of good fortune which shone upon my gloom when Muriel read me your letter. Again I say God bless you. "Jos Copthall."

The die was cast, and there was no escape save by heroic methods, and from these my spirit recoiled. I put on as good a face as possible, and played the lover's part with ardour enough to make Muriel happy for a time; but the old gentleman now and then tried my patience sorely, and once when he suggested that he himself should become a member of our household after the marriage, I lost my temper; but Mr. Copthall, as is not seldom the case with people where forgiveness is a matter of no great moment, refused to harbour resentment, and went on calling me his

dear boy as usual. Come what might he would never quarrel with me. He knew his way about too well for that. Release was not fated to come to me that fashion.

As I sit smoking my going-to-bed pipe in my not uncomfortable bachelor quarters I often wonder what would have been our lot if we had married one another, Muriel and I—if Mr. Godfrey Trumble, widower and sugar broker, and owner of a villa and brougham as well, had not also fallen a victim to Miss Copthall's charms, and wooed her with songs more seductive than any I could attune. Muriel is now Mrs. C. Godfrey Trumble, the leader of one of the best sets in Belham, a little too stout for her years perhaps, but a handsome woman all the same, and very kind and gracious to me whenever we happen to meet.

FAMILY RHYMES AND PROVERBS.

FAMILY mottoes, watchwords, and rallying cries found their historian long ago, but there are pithy sayings relating to well-known families and distinguished individuals that do not find place in any one work. From ancient memoirs, mediæval manuscripts, and old county histories, research may reclaim these scattered proverbial phrases, or, haply, from the lips of some "hoary-headed swain" in the remote hamlet. The present short collection, so compiled, is a fairly representative one, and may prove not uninteresting to the reader.

There is an old legend in Bucks that one of the Saxon thanes, dispossessed by the Normans, mounted himself and his adherents on bulls, routed the invaders, and regained his lands. Afterwards, attended by his seven sons, mounted in the same strange fashion, he made his way to the Conqueror's court to plead his cause. William was so amused at this strange company that he allowed the thane to retain his lands on the original tenure, and conferred on him and his heirs for ever the surname of Bulstrode. The local distich runs:

> When William conquer'd English ground,
> Bulstrode had per annum three hundred pound.

There are other families similarly credited with ancient standing.

> Before the Normans into England came,
> Bentley was my seat and Tollemache was my name,

says an old Suffolk rhyme. The lines are said to have been inscribed on the old manor house at Bentley, near Ipswich. Antiquaries doubt the truth of the jingle, but one good proof of the antiquity of the family is the fact that Sir Hugh de Tollemache held of the Crown the manor of Bentley, and the fourth part of the village of Akerton, by knight's service, in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Edward the First.

Then we have this couplet, which affirms of three ancient Saxon families of Devonshire:

> Croker, Crewis, and Coplestone,
> When the Conqueror came were at home.

Of the Collingwood family of Lillburn Tower, Northumberland, whose crest is a stag beneath an oak tree, the verse says:

> The Collingwoods have borne the name
> Since in the bush the buck was ta'en,
> But when the bush shall hold the buck
> Then welcome faith and farewell luck.

Other families are celebrated in less pleasant fashion. In Durham many people still remember these lines:

> Johnny tuth' Bellas daft was thy poll
> When thou changed Bellas for Henknole!

According to tradition, John of Bellasis, of Bellasis, Stannington, Northumberland, changed the green pastures and sheep meadows of Bellasis, with the Church of Durham, for Henknowle, near Auckland. The story, it is said, was preserved on one of the windows of St. Andrew's, Auckland, where, inscribed on a belt encircling the arms of Bellasis, was a variation of the above lines.

Fuller, the divine, says of the jingle:

> The Tracies
> Have always the wind in their faces,

"This is founded on a fond and false tradition, which reports that ever since Sir William Tracy was most active among the four knights who killed Thomas Becket, it is imposed on the Tracys for miraculous penance that, whether they go by land or by water, the wind is ever in their faces."

Another Gloucestershire verse runs:

> In days of yore, old Abraham Elt,
> When living had nor sword nor belt;
> But now his son, Sir Abraham Elton,
> Being knighted hath both sword and belt on.

It seems that the son changed his name from Elt to Elton on being knighted. The epigram is preserved in the Harleian MS. No. 7318, in the British Museum.

The next is a traditional Lancashire rhyme:

> Sweet Jesu for thy mercy's sake,
> And for thy bitter passion,
> O save me from a burning stake,
> And from Sir Rauf de Assheton.

It refers to Sir Ralph Ashton, who, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, exercised great severity as vice-constable.

A manuscript of the sixteenth century, in the Sloane collection, No. 2497, preserves this riddling verse:

N for a word of deniance,
E with a figure of L fiftie,
Spelleth his name that never
Will be thriftie.

The solution is "Noel," and, according to Shirley's "Noble and Gentlemen of England," William, the ancestor of all the English Noels, was living in the reign of Henry the First.

After the spoliation of the monasteries by Henry the Eighth, the people of Somersetshire had this rhyme of the four families to whom the site of Glastonbury Abbey was given:

Homer, Popham, Wyndham, and Thynne,
When the abbot went out, then they went in.

But a variant relating to other families aggrandised by similar gifts was in use among the Wiltshire people, too:

Hopton, Homer, Smyth, Knocknaile, and Thynne, etc.

Lower, in his "Patronymica Britannica," says: "A family of this name, Knocknaile, in Wiltshire, was enriched by the spoliation of the monasteries by Henry the Eighth, and the old traditional rhyme records them, and some of their neighbours."

Thrift, wealth, or luck of the individual usually becomes proverbial. Of Roger Thornton, of Newcastle, one of its most wealthy merchants and greatest benefactors, who died in 1429, the people were wont to say:

At the Westgate cam' Thornton in,
With a hap, a halfpenny, and a lamb's skin.

A "hap," be it understood, is a cover of coarse material.

Another prosperous merchant, John Hawley, who lived at Dartmouth, in the time of Henry the Fourth, was immortalised in the couplet:

Blow the wind high, or blow it low,
It bloweth good to Hawley's hoe,

"Efe a aeth ya Glough"—i.e., He is become a Clough—runs the Cheshire proverb of any man who makes his fortune. The Cloughs are a very rich Cheshire family, descended from Sir Richard Clough, a merchant in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and a friend of Sir Thomas Gresham.

At Durham they have an equivocal rhyme:

John Lively, Vicar of Kelloe,
Had seven daughters, and never a fellow,

which may mean either that the parson of the sixteenth century had no son, or that he had no equal in learning, etc. He certainly mentions no son in his will.

Sometimes mischance gives the person immortality:

The Lord Dacre
Was slain in North Acre,

is a Yorkshire couplet relating to a Lancashire leader slain at the battle of Towton, 1461. It is said that a boy shot him from an elder tree.

Shirley, of Preston,
Died for the loss of Wiston,

is said of a member of the Shirley or Shelley family, of Sussex, who had a seat at Preston, near Brighton, for many years.

Any distinguishing quality is, or was, rapidly turned to proverb.

Gervase the gentle, Stanhope the stout,
Marcham the lion, and Sutton the lout,

relates to four Northamptonshire knights. One of the "Pleasant Conceits of Old Hobson" is somewhat similar to the above:

Ramsay the rich, Bond the stout,
Beacher the gentleman, and Cooper the lout.

Sir John Ramsay, who was Lord Mayor of London, is one of the persons mentioned.

"Never a Granville wanted loyalty, a Godolphin wit, or a Trelawney courage," say the Cornishmen.

"He is none of the Hastings" is spoken of a slow person in Leicestershire. Ray, writing in the seventeenth century, says: "There is an equivoque in the word 'Hastings,' which is the name of a great family in Leicestershire, which were Earls of Huntingdon. They had a fair house at Ashley-de-la-Zouch, now much ruined." The Devonshire folk remark of a sharp fellow that he is "as cunning as Captain Drake," and the Cheshire people say of a pretty girl, "as fair as Lady Done"—the Dones were a great family living in Utkinton, by the forest side in that county. Another saying of this county is:

As many Leighs as fleas,
Massies as asses,
And Davenports as dogs' tails.

"Please God and Lord Mount Edgecumbe" is current in the neighbourhood of Mount Edgecumbe, near Devonport, where the Earl is the principal resident.

This short paper may conclude with the motto of William of Wickham, Bishop of Winchester, founder of the Winchester College, in Hampshire, and of New College, Oxford. He was famous also for his skill in architecture, and this sentence, now become an adage, was usually inscribed on places of his foundation:

Manners maketh the man,
Quoth William of Wickham.

SO WELL MATCHED!

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THEY were just made for each other.

Everybody said so, and of course what everybody said must be right.

The estates joined, which was a clear pointing; their ages were just suitable—he was twenty-two, she was nineteen; exactly the right difference, Leo's uncle declared—their characters, tastes, and dispositions were just sufficiently contrasted to make each the natural complement of the other. In fact, they were just made for each other.

"And I'd far rather have been made for myself," Cicely said discontentedly.

The girl was leaning over a gate as she uttered this heretical sentiment; standing on her own ground, and looking with wide grey eyes that had a touch of disdain in them over Leo's sloping meadows, now golden with cowslips, and starred near the edge with pensive wood-anemones. Leo himself, sitting on the adjoining stile, but on his side of the dividing gate, heard her without disquiet, an amused smile on his handsome sunburnt face, and merely enquired:

"Why?"

"Because I'm tired to death of it all."

"Of our engagement, of me, or of what?"

"Of it all, I tell you," she repeated drearily, but without looking at him. "Of hearing every day and all day long how wonderfully suited we are to each other; of being told how we were destined for each other even in our cradles; of how we were little lovers in the nursery—how could we have been such little idiots, Leo? Aunt is always particularly strong on that little lover business!—of how we never had a thought for anybody but each other even in our schooldays. Oh, it's dreadful!"

"It is rather sickening, perhaps," thoughtfully, "as they put it, I mean."

"But it isn't true, surely?" and she turned her grey eyes full upon him. "Oh, Leo, you must have thought of somebody else at some time or other?"

He laughed. "I ought to have done so, no doubt; but in point of fact I can't remember that I ever did—in that way, you know."

She turned away with a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, how terribly, how hopelessly prosaic of you! Are you not ashamed to think how tamely you have walked through life in exactly the way that has been expected of you, taking the very steps that a proper regard for the feelings of relations and guardians would naturally urge you to take? Oh, it is too humiliating!"

"I'm very sorry, dear," but he scarcely looked it. "And you, Cicely," and he pushed back his straw hat and looked at her, a mischievous twinkle in his brown eyes, "of course you've thought of ever so many other fellows in the nursery and the schoolroom, and all over the place? I know you wouldn't be prosaic for anything."

"I?—oh, that's different," with a sudden swift change of colour. "Besides, what opportunity have I had, always living here buried in the country, and always hearing of your manifold perfections?"

"I'm not surprised you are tired of the subject," sympathetically; "the only wonder is that you don't absolutely hate me—if, indeed, you do not."

"No, I don't hate you," she replied, speaking in a judicial and dispassionate tone; "I like you, I have always liked you, Leo; only it all seems so commonplace and unavoidable, so much a matter of course—our engagement, I mean—that there is nothing in it to be particularly interested in, far less excited over. Are you not sometimes afraid that by-and-by we shall be horribly bored, knowing each other as well as we do?"

"I'm not afraid that you will ever bore me, if that's what you mean. As to the rest——" he paused for a moment, looking earnestly at the delicate profile and wavy golden hair that she turned towards him, in neither of which was much encouragement to be found.

"If you think I shall bore you, Cicely," he resumed quietly, "allow me to remind you that it is not yet too late to throw me over. We may have drifted into an engagement, but there is no need to carry it out."

"Drifted, Leo?"

"Yes; that seems to me about to describe the position. We went with the tide, since it was too much trouble to struggle against it."

"And you wish to break it off?"

"Pardon me, I haven't said so."

"But—you implied it," slowly.

"I pointed out that if you wished to throw me over, it was not yet too late to do so. It was in your interest that I spoke, not my own."

"And you wish——"

"My wishes have nothing to do with

the matter—save so far as this: I certainly don't wish to marry any woman who regards marriage with me as a bore. My wife may very likely be bored, but I should object to her marrying me with that expectation."

He spoke in a calm, matter-of-fact tone that Cicely knew well, but that puzzled her none the less. Did he care, or did he not? His manner betrayed nothing, and his face was as inscrutable as his manner.

"I wonder why it's so annoying to have everything taken for granted?" she said impatiently.

"How do you mean?"

"Doesn't it ever chafe you to find that your whole life has been kindly planned out and arranged for you?"

"Not if the planning out falls in with my own views," he replied coolly. "Why shouldn't I take a good thing that comes in my way, simply because other people can see how pleasant and desirable it is? Surely, were I to refuse it on that ground, I should merely be a fool for my pains."

"You have such a horribly cool, calm, and collected way of looking at things."

"Have I? Well, why not?"

"Oh, no reason at all—if you like it," petulantly.

"My dear Cicely," he said gravely, "what is the matter with you to-day? Is it such an offence that people should think us well suited to each other?"

"No, perhaps not," she conceded reluctantly, "but that they should be for ever talking about it is——"

"The remedy is easy. Don't listen to them."

"As if I could help it! Aunt Maria is not the sort of person to talk without making herself heard, and as to the General——"

"I often don't hear half that he says to me. But he is none the wiser, and I'm none the worse."

"Don't you think Aunt Maria and he would be very well matched, Leo?" and she turned to him suddenly with mirthful eyes. "Age, character, tastes, everything, just right."

"And landed property," he added gravely. "Don't forget that."

"Yes; their estates, being both in Spain, may very likely join. Really, Leo, it's providential. They are just made for each other."

"Why don't you tell them so?" the young man demanded, looking at the bright face above him, from which the cloud of discontent had vanished.

"I shall. At least, I'll tell Aunt Maria, and you shall tell the General. Let us be revenged on them by doing a little match-making on our own account, and carrying the war into the enemy's country."

"What a child you are, Cicely! But how can you find it in your heart to doom others to a fate from which you were yourself so anxious to escape but a few minutes ago?"

"Did you never hear the story of the fox that lost his brush?" she retorted with a radiant smile. "He wanted all the world to be reduced to the same pitiable condition. I am more reasonable than he, for I only plot against those who have brought me to this pass. Well, what do you think of my idea?"

"There's poetic justice in it, no doubt."

"And common sense, for they are certainly suited to each other."

"Not having a single trait in common."

"That's just it. If the rule hold good in our case, why not in theirs?"

"Oh, come now," he protested. "I don't think we are so diametrically opposed in tastes, temper, and opinions as they are."

"Wait till we are their age, my dear boy, and you will see."

"They say, Cicely, that married people often grow alike."

"How very dull that must be for the married people!" demurely. "But, Leo, remember you and your uncle dine with us to-morrow. Speak to him carefully, and prepare his mind; and I'll do the same by Aunt Maria."

He nodded; and rising, took the small, ungloved hand she held out to him. "See here, dear," he said, detaining her as she was turning away. "You're rarely in earnest, I know; and I can't tell how much you may have meant of all you have said to-day. But if you really repent your promise to marry me, remember it's not too late to say so. Perhaps it was hardly fair to ask you till you'd seen more of the world."

"Why did you do it, then?" she asked, with a swift glance at his downcast face.

"I'm afraid I took things too much for granted, and forgot that what would make me happy might not satisfy you. Think it over, Cicely, and if you wish to be free——"

"Yes?" as he paused.

"I'll not try to keep you. Trust me, dear, even if you can't love me."

He bent his head, and pressed the hand

he held to his lips; then turned away and strode across the fields without one backward glance, while she stood watching him with tears in her eyes, and wonder and dismay in her heart.

Was he going to take her seriously after all, and just when she did not want to be so taken?

Surely, surely he should have known her better than that!

Then suddenly she broke into low, rippling laughter. After all, the matter was in her own hands; the decision rested with her.

He had taken things too much for granted hitherto—he had said so himself, and she quite agreed with him. A little uncertainty would do him no harm, and might give new piquancy to their somewhat matter-of-fact engagement.

He should have it, then, yes—he should enjoy a little uncertainty, and afterwards——!

CHAPTER II.

"Ah, Leo, you lucky dog, you! And when is it to be?"

"The cricket match, General, or the local flower show?"

"Local flower show be—hanged! I'm speaking of your wedding, my boy—your wedding with the most charming girl in England—and you know it."

"I regret that I can give you no information on the subject."

"Then you're a bigger fool than I took you for; you are, upon my soul, and that's saying a good deal! There have you been spending the whole morning with her—I couldn't help seeing you from the longacre gate—a spring morning with birds singing and lambs frisking; poetry in the air, and all the rest of it; you and she together, and the world before you, and yet you haven't been able to get a simple answer to a simple question! It's astonishing! It's—it's humiliating!"

"And what if I never asked her the question?"

"Never asked her the question?" And General Graydon cocked his old straw hat fiercely, and drew up his somewhat short, square figure to its full height. "And pray, did you expect her to ask you? Young fellows had more go in them when I was a boy. If we wanted to marry a woman, we didn't think it too much trouble to woo her. The world has changed since my time."

"Yet—if you wooed you don't seem to have won, sir; or how comes it that you are still a bachelor?"

"Lack of means, Leo; not lack of opportunity, or of spirit. The pretty girls had no money, the heiresses no good looks."

"You and Cicely's aunt are always urging us to marry," the young man remarked, mindful of Cicely's admonition; "but your arguments would come with fifty times their present force if you were married yourselves."

"Miss Langley is a fine woman, but he would be a bold man who'd marry her now."

"What of that? 'None but the brave deserve the fair,' you know."

"I should be sorry to win her!" with a jovial laugh.

"Why, she seems just made for you, if you'll allow me to say so."

"She's made several sizes too big for me, you mean. And she's so pious. She's 'got religion,' as those revivalist fellows say. I haven't, though I go to church like other people."

"She is clearly exactly suited to you: she supplies your deficiencies."

"Our tastes, again; why, we haven't a taste in common. She disapproves of tobacco, cards, sporting papers, and, in short, all the things I like. She's death on temperance and tracts."

"Better and better. You would have lots of things to disagree about during the long winter evenings."

"By Jove, sir!" and the General turned on him angrily as they strolled across the lawn together, "do you wish me to marry the woman?"

"Only for the sake of example, yes; you should practise as you preach, you know."

"Preach? I don't preach. I leave that to the parsons."

"You are always pointing out how admirably Cicely and I are suited to each other, and——"

"Cicely's a charming girl; if I could marry Cicely, now——"

"She is just the right age for me. I have it on your own authority."

"And I'm just the right age for her aunt! It's rather a shock to know this, but I dare say you're right, boy, though it hadn't struck me in that light before. Well, she's a fine-looking woman still, and a good three inches taller than I am! I don't think it would work, Leo."

"It's your affair, of course; only you seem so made for each other——"

"You're a wag, sir, you're a wag, though I never knew it till now! But I'll think

over what you say, and if I can bring my mind to it——"

"Don't let me influence you, General."

"I won't ! Nobody shall influence me but Miss Langley, and she only if—— We are dining there to-morrow. I'll certainly think over what you say, and keep my eyes open."

"Do, uncle. Your example would have ten times more weight with me than any amount of precepts."

"And Miss Langley's with Cicely, no doubt. There is reason in what you say; but I must take my time, Leo."

"I have no wish to hurry you, sir."

And with that the subject dropped.

"My dear Cicely," Aunt Maria was saying at this very moment to the girl, who ran into the morning room flushed and breathless; "how heated you look ! Where have you been all the morning ?"

"In the fields," and she dropped into a chair, fanning herself vigorously with her shady hat. "It's delicious out of doors in this lovely weather."

"And have you been—ahem !—alone ?"

"Nearly as bad. Leo was with me."

"Ah, what a devoted lover he is. I do hope, my dear, you appreciate your blessings properly. Few girls are so fortunate as you are."

"Few girls are so bored as I am," with an ostentatious sigh.

"Bored, Cicely ? But you cannot be serious, my love. Think of all you possess —wealth, position, kind relatives, faithful friends, a loving heart that beats for you alone." It was well that Aunt Maria could not see Cicely's face as she spoke ! "And then remember all the poor girls who have none of these good gifts—girls, many of them, quite as high-principled as you are, and often far better-looking—and you will see how kind Providence has been to you, and——"

"How unjust to others, who, by your own showing, deserve these good gifts ever so much more than I do ?"

"Cicely, no doubt it is all wisely ordered for the best."

"Still, I wish things were more equally divided. Why should all these extremely estimable girls have nothing, while I have so much more than I want, or shall ever know what to do with ? Why may I not make them happy with a few of my superfluities ? Half of my wealth, relatives, friends, etc., would set a lot of them up for life; and I'm sure I could very well spare them."

"My dear, you are talking wildly. Even if you were not engaged to Leo, what good would he be amongst so many ? Your giving him up could only benefit one of those girls."

"I wasn't thinking of Leo so much as of my friends and relatives."

Conscience and a certain feeling of loyalty to the absent Leo constrained Cicely to say so much, but she spoke in so low a tone that Aunt Maria did not catch the words.

"Ah, my dear, don't get led astray by any of the modern mistaken notions; they are vulgar and contrary to the teaching of the inspired writers, especially Saint Paul. What would he have said to all this talk about Women's Rights ? and how would he have liked to hear hallelujah lasses beating their tambourines and preaching at street corners ? Oh, my love, don't let the riotous spirit of the age lead you into these extravagances !"

"I've no wish to do anything of the sort. I assure you, aunt, the Salvation Army doesn't attract me. The bonnet is too unbecoming."

"Ah, child, marriage is woman's true mission. If she miss that, she misses her natural vocation. Providence intended us to be wives, not strong-minded females."

"Then why didn't Providence provide men enough to marry us all ?"

"Do not be flippant, Cicely. No doubt there is some wise purpose in it."

"And then the confirmed bachelors, such as General Graydon. What a mean thing on their part to stand aside and prevent some unhappy woman from fulfilling her mission. Yet the General is always urging Leo to marry: it is so inconsistent."

"That is true," thoughtfully. "I do not understand the General."

"How can he expect his words to have any influence with Leo when his actions entirely disown them ? Unmarried people cannot speak with any authority on marriage."

"I am myself an unmarried person, dear."

"I know it, but I can't help that; you—I have no doubt—could. How is it, auntie, that with your high opinion of the married state, you are still an unmarried person ?"

"Marriage is a lottery, and I was always afraid to tempt Providence by putting into it."

"You seem convinced that I shall draw a prize. Why should you not have had as good luck yourself ?"

Miss Langley's pale face flushed, and she shook her head sadly.

"I fear I was proud, Cicely, and very hard to please," she said with a sigh.

"If only the General and you could make up your minds to it," Cicely began, speaking more to herself, as it seemed, than to her aunt.

"To what, child?" as she hesitated.

"You are so wonderfully suited to each other——"

"I—and the General?"

"Why, you might make another man of him!"

"I? But he is quite a worldly person; he plays cards, and drinks—oh, not too much; I don't mean that, but more than he need; and—and—no, Cicely, we have nothing in common, absolutely nothing."

"You'll have me in common, and Leo—when we are married. And you both have an immense opinion of the desirability of marriage, or you wouldn't be always urging it upon us. You shouldn't be afraid of your own prescription, aunt."

"But, my dear, you forget, even if I could bring myself to contemplate such an idea, he has never asked me to marry him."

"How could he, when you always look at him as if you are longing to give him a tract?"

"That is just what I am longing to do. He has many fine qualities, and it grieves me to see them lying fallow, as it were, when they only require a little careful cultivation. But this is all folly. General Graydon and I——"

"Are just made for each other. 'You are just sufficiently discordant to make a perfect harmony."

"You talk like an inexperienced girl, Cicely. The General will probably never marry, and if he does——"

"Yes?" as she paused.

"He will be far more likely to choose some little chit out of the schoolroom than a lady of suitable age and fixed principles."

"You would be so well matched—ever so much better than Leo and—— I wish you'd take him up, auntie. I believe the poor man only wants a little encouragement."

"My love, I don't think discussions of this nature are quite in good taste."

"So I used to think, till you taught me better! 'Imitation,' you know, 'is the sincerest form of flattery.'"

"And, in any case, I am sure you are mistaken."

"Perhaps I am;" in a perfectly colourless tone: "so please don't think any more of my little idea."

"No, dear, I will not; and as the General and Leo are dining here to-morrow——"

"We'll say no more about it."

But though nothing more was said, Cicely was convinced that Miss Langley thought a great deal; nor, to judge from the expression of her serious face, were her thoughts altogether unpleasant ones.

And the General and Leo were coming to-morrow evening!

It was a most fortunate thing for everybody.

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 309.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

"I HAVE given you Dr. Branston, Olive!"

Olive Kenderdine fastened her bracelet over the long glove which she had just drawn on with a decided snap.

"Very well," she said briefly, "that's all right."

She walked across the brilliantly lighted drawing-room as she spoke, to a long mirror, in which she inspected herself critically. She was very carefully and becomingly dressed in a dinner-dress that showed her tall figure to conspicuous advantage; and about her tone, expression, and manner alike, there was an all-pervading resolution. Mrs. Slade-Fenton glanced across at her approvingly.

"You seem to have changed your mind," she remarked.

"Yes," was the concise answer; "I have." She paused a moment, and then said abruptly: "I don't see that you need have asked that friend of the Henleys for to-night, Alice!"

Mrs. Slade-Fenton put up her long-handled eyeglasses.

"Lady Karslake!" she said carelessly. "I was obliged to ask her some time or other. Why not to-night?"

Miss Kenderdine laughed unpleasantly.

"Oh, no reason," she said; "only it isn't always a desirable thing under the circumstances, to invite old acquaintances to the same party. She's an old acquaintance of Dr. Branston's."

"Yes," said Mrs. Slade-Fenton. "So I understand."

She spoke somewhat absently, and her lips were just parted to speak again when Miss Kenderdine came towards her, saying callously:

"It doesn't matter! She has put a touch of spice into a flat affair. Thank heaven for that!"

The door opened as she finished speaking to admit the master of the house, shrewd, convincing, irreproachable as usual, in dress and manner; and close upon his entrance followed the announcement of the first guests.

The subdued hum of before dinner conversation was filling the drawing-room; nine out of the eleven guests expected had arrived, and Olive Kenderdine was nonchalantly watching the door when it opened to admit North Branston.

Before his reception by his hostess was over, Miss Kenderdine, with an easy assumption of the rôle of daughter or sister of the house—which she was wont to put off and on as suited her convenience—had disengaged herself from the group she had been entertaining, and was ready to welcome the new-comer.

"You are to take me in," she said familiarly. "I may as well break it to you at once. Why were you not at the Montagues' last night, Dr. Branston?"

Her manner to him differed conspicuously from her manner at the party at which he had met Lady Karslake four nights before. The spiteful indecision which had pervaded it then was replaced by a hard friendliness which was Miss Kenderdine's substitute for an ingratiating manner.

But if her demeanour and expression were altered, North's were not.

"I was not at the Montagues'," he said, "because I was at the Bartons'."

"A mistake!" retorted Miss Kenderdine audaciously. "The Montagues are far more useful people."

He make a gesture of assent.

"Of course," he said carelessly. "But these things will happen occasionally." He glanced round the room. "We seem to be waiting," he said. "Who is it?"

Miss Kenderdine unfurled her fan.

"An acquaintance of yours," she said. "Lady Karslake. People who protract this gruesome quarter of an hour ought to be smothered!"

At the same moment the door opened, and Lady Karslake was announced. She came in, graceful and self-possessed, and the pair between whom her name had just been uttered paused with the instinct natural to the circumstances, and watched her entrance. This time her appearance brought no change to North Branston's face.

"Rather a pretty woman," said Miss Kenderdine carelessly. "How long is it since her husband died?"

"About two years," answered North. Lady Karslake, catching sight of him across the room, had given him a bow and a smile, and he returned the bow as he spoke.

"Has she been in retirement all this time?" commented the girl, with a sneer "He was much older than she, wasn't he? I suppose she married him for his money."

"I really cannot tell you," returned North. "Most marriages have something of the kind behind them, I suppose!"

He had offered her his arm, and they were following in the procession of couples towards the dining-room. She looked round at him sharply, and answered:

"Oh, I suppose so. And after all, why not? If marriage were a temporary arrangement one might afford to be sentimental over it. But its permanency renders it necessary to remember that there are more important things in life than sentiment. We are on the other side of the table, Dr. Branston, near the bottom."

She slipped her hand out of his arm as she gave him this direction, and preceded him round the room, looking back at him over her shoulder. It was not until she had reached the first of the two vacant chairs, for which she had instinctively been making, that she looked towards it. As she did so the couple beyond came for the first time within her line of sight. She did not pause in her speech, but a quick flush, as of surprise and annoyance, coloured her whole face, and she cast one expressive glance at Mrs. Slade-Fenton. Separated from her hostess by the man who had brought her in, and next the chair which was to be North Branston's, sat Lady Karslake.

Lady Karslake looked up with a smile as the owner of the empty chair took possession, drawing in the train of her dress for his greater convenience.

"We are neighbours!" she said. "That is pleasant."

The Eve Karslake of to-day was thinner than the Eve Karslake of two years ago; people who were not fond of her added to this dictum a comment to the effect that she was also older-looking. Her features, always delicately moulded, had lost their roundness of contour, and had indeed, in so doing, acquired that peculiar refinement of outline which is not consistent with any suggestion of youth. There were no traces of age about her beautiful eyes, but they had acquired—perhaps merely from the sharper chiselling of the other features—something which they had not known two years before. It was something hardly to be defined, as it looked out of her eyes alone; but there were moments of repose, nowadays, when her face seemed to fall into faint lines which were wholly new to it; which were not exactly lines of weariness, disappointment, or dissatisfaction; but which vaguely suggested now one, now another, of these feelings. And in such moments the expression of her eyes revealed itself as a wistful satiety.

Her tone to North Branston, now, was that of the simplest society friendliness, and, having thus greeted him, she turned to the man to whom her attention was due.

"What were we talking about?" said Miss Kenderdine on North's other side. There was an assumption of carelessness in her tone which by no means concealed the strong access of acerbity which had affected it since she spoke last.

"I am quite prepared to follow your lead," was the composed and uninterested reply.

"That's very valiant of you," she retorted. "Doesn't it occur to you that it may be an unwise thing to give a woman her head with such a statement as that! Suppose I were to take advantage of it?"

Perhaps the indifference with which North Branston, judging from his expression, contemplated such a possibility, stimulated Miss Kenderdine to carry out the threat contained in her words. Certainly when two-thirds of the long dinner had gone by, she had shown no signs of flagging in the provision of those same conversational leads. She talked exclusively to North Branston, and she talked incessantly. It was clever talk enough, characterised by all

the surface wit, shrewdness, and brilliancy of a capable woman of the world, and North Branston listened and replied, putting in those caustic observations which responded to her humour.

"Have you seen the latest contribution to the education question?"

Miss Kenderdine passed to the question from a biting summary of the last new novel, and helped herself to ice-pudding as she spoke. At the same time the conversation on North's other hand, which had been carried on more or less generally between Lady Karslake and her cavalier, Mrs. Slade-Fenton and the man on her other side, drifted away from Lady Karslake; and the slender figure at North's side sat in disengaged silence, the expressive face turned slightly and carelessly in his direction.

"Yes," said North, a contemptuous smile touching his lips as he answered Miss Kenderdine. She had referred to a magazine article by a well-known philanthropist, which was being a good deal talked about. "It is just what one would expect from the man."

"Do you imagine that he believes in all his beautiful theories, or is it an ingenious form of self-advertisement?"

North Branston shrugged his shoulders.

"Impossible to say. There is a good deal of advertisement connected with it, at least."

"Ah, Dr. Branston, I must take up the cudgels! I have an admiration for the man you are maligning!"

It was Lady Karslake who spoke. Her voice, musical and low, had taken up the word with the perfect composure of a woman who can commit, and commit gracefully, breaches of etiquette which other women could hardly manage successfully. She paused a moment as North turned towards her, looking past him at Miss Kenderdine, with a slight inclination of her head. The movement was a tacit apology, very gracious and easy; but there was something in Lady Karslake's eyes, as they rested for one moment on the girl, which was not quite in harmony with it. Miss Kenderdine returned the look with a silent stare, and Lady Karslake addressing the two generally, went on with a low laugh:

"I am always inclined to fight for the absent—innate pugnacity on my part, I suppose. I read the article of which you are both so scornful, this afternoon, and it struck me as being rather nice."

"The word describes it exactly, Lady Karslake," said North, with a touch of irony in his dry tone. "It is really very nice!"

"Then why sneer at it?"

Lady Karslake put the question quickly, looking him full in face as she spoke. But it was Miss Kenderdine who answered.

"Scented soap is nice," she said. "But it would be wasteful and futile to scour Seven Dials with it, wouldn't it?"

"Not wasteful, if it sweetened Seven Dials," returned Lady Karslake promptly, and with a spirited ring in her voice. "As to the futility——"

"That is the point," interposed North, drily. "Is it possible to sweeten Seven Dials?"

"No!" said Miss Kenderdine, callously.

"Yes!" said Lady Karslake impetuously.

Miss Kenderdine broke into a laugh, and looked at North Branston.

"The casting vote, Dr. Branston," she demanded. "Come, which is it?"

Lady Karslake did not speak. She had turned her eyes, in which a delicate and perfectly perceptible aversion had arisen, from Miss Kenderdine to North; and she was watching him with a half-curious smile. North did not look at her, however, he turned carelessly to Miss Kenderdine.

"No!" he said. "It isn't possible. Seven Dials is radically evil-savoured!"

"And human nature is radically wrong?"

He glanced at Lady Karslake as she spoke these words, and made a gesture of acquiescence.

"More or less," he said. "The thing that will right it has not been discovered yet, at any rate. It isn't possible to eradicate the tendencies and instincts of centuries with a few facts about the sciences and a knowledge of grammar and arithmetic. It is an eloquent testimony to the blank hopelessness of the whole subject that such a remedy should ever have suggested itself!"

The manner of the speech was indescribably hard, and Lady Karslake's brows contracted quickly. She did not speak immediately, and Miss Kenderdine said flippantly:

"There's nothing much the matter with human nature. It's admirably adapted to the world as it is. But a certain proportion of the population is sure to go to the bad, and certain classes of crime are hereditary in certain classes of society. Education isn't likely to prevent crime. It will only mix it up—just as cheap things have mixed up the fashions in dress."

She laughed as she spoke, looking to

North with an assured demand on his appreciation, and Lady Karslake glanced at her with a cold haughtiness of expression which her sensitive face very seldom assumed.

"Crime is a large word," she said. "I'm afraid I don't feel capable of coping with so solid a subject. But," she turned to North with a wilful, fleeting smile, "there are other and less imposing lines, are there not, on which something may be said for education? How about the dull and narrow lives which a little knowledge widens? How about the ugly lives which it may beautify? How about the talents it developes which might never otherwise have made themselves apparent?"

She had spoken impetuously, as though impelled half by a spirit of opposition to the atmosphere which surrounded her, half by an enthusiasm which seemed partly æsthetic, partly sentimental, but which in its very unexpectedness was wholly womanly and characteristic. North paused a moment and smiled unpleasantly.

"As to the widening and beautifying, Lady Karslake, I don't feel qualified to speak, for neither of those processes has ever come under my notice. I'm not prepared to deny that when the present system of education gets hold of the right kind of subject, it does develope that which might otherwise have lain dormant. But the question is—is that developement a gain?"

"Surely!"

He lifted his eyebrows at the impetuous response, and went on slowly and coldly:

"Oddly enough, a case of the kind has just come under my notice. A boy with instincts and capacities above his station in life; with no physical stamina; brought on by Board School teaching; developed into a sensitive, ambitious kind of being; and provided with an opening in an office in the City. He gets on, marries, overstrains his energies, and collapses hopelessly in health at five-and-twenty."

He had told the story baldly, callously, and the heartless interjection with which Miss Kenderdine responded was absolutely in keeping with his tone. Lady Karslake had listened with her chin resting lightly on her hand as her elbow rested on the table, her face interested and intent.

"It's not an uncommon case," said Miss Kenderdine flippantly. "It serves your point well enough, Dr. Branston, except for one detail. If he was a really clever fellow I suppose he would have educated himself, School Board or no School Board, and the result would have been the same."

"Not quite," said North. "He would have educated himself no doubt, but the strain and hardship involved would have killed him earlier, and there would have been no wife and child in the case."

At that instant Mrs. Slade-Fenton bowed. With a quick, sudden gesture, Lady Karslake rose. Without another word or glance at Miss Kenderdine or at North Branston, she swept out of the dining-room.

When Dr. Slade-Fenton and his male guests appeared in the drawing-room some twenty minutes later, she was sitting at the far end of the room, hardly in touch with the larger circle of ladies, which was being entertained by Miss Kenderdine. She did not look towards North Branston as he came in. Some time passed, during which she talked to various people with somewhat capricious interest, and then, as in the conventional fulfilment of his social duties, North strolled up to her.

There had been some music, and he produced a sarcastic comment on it for her benefit. She answered him briefly, without looking at him; then she suddenly lifted her eyes to his face. No one was very near them; some one began to play at the moment, and they were out of sight from the piano. Her words were audible to him alone, as she said in a quick, moved voice:

"Dr. Branston, I hardly know you! What have you done to yourself?"

He looked down at her without the faintest touch of comprehension in his face, and then sat down mechanically on the corner seat beside her.

"I am not aware that I have done anything to myself," he said with a slight smile.

She scanned his face for a moment in silence, a curious regret struggling with the indignation in her eyes.

"No," she said slowly. "I suppose you are not. I hear that you are very successful, by-the-bye, and I believe I ought to congratulate you. But don't you know that you have altered horribly?"

"We all alter, don't we?" he said nonchalantly; "and I suppose most of us alter, as you say, horribly."

She put up her hand with a swift, imperious gesture.

"Don't!" she said impetuously. "I'm not going to argue the point with you; it's true enough, I daresay. But if it's true, it isn't the less dreadful. It isn't the less one of the saddest things in life. Ah!" she

let her hand fall with an indescribably pathetic gesture. "What a miserable, miserable thing it is to grow old!"

The words were spoken with a laugh, but there was a helpless, restless unhappiness behind them which was not to be concealed. North Branston looked at the womanly face, and for the first time that evening his own expression altered slightly.

"You have not come to that stage yet," he said, and beneath the conventional disclaimer of the reply there lurked a ring of vague sympathy. "Time has been kind to you, I hope, Lady Karslake?"

She lifted her eyes to his face again with a little wayward grimace.

"Is time ever kind?" she said.

His eyes grew deep and sombre, and he stared down at the carpet at his feet.

"Have you found that out?" he said in a low, abrupt tone. "That is a pity. You used not to know it! You used——"

"I used to take things as they came!" she said, interrupting him with an inflection in her voice half whimsical and half sad. "Well, I do it still. I've got through one phase of my life, I suppose, that's all. I've lost sundry illusions, and I did not even know I possessed any! And all my contemporaries have lost their illusions too! I know it's natural that you should have changed as you have done, for instance—it's the way of the world. But—I hate it."

"What are these changes that you see in me?"

The words came from North after a long pause; a pause filled in by the hopeless questions of Schumann's "Warum." His strong, doctor's hands were playing absently with the feathers of her fan. She did not answer him at once.

"It is not a nice thing to say," she said at last, very quietly. "But you have grown a little brutal, Dr. Branston."

He laughed suddenly and harshly.

"Probably I was always a little brutal," he answered.

Her answer came quick and decided.

"No, you were only bitter."

"I suppose the transition is not an unnatural one."

"Ah!" she ejaculated, with a sharp movement of pain, "does that make it the less sad?"

The words were followed by a silence. With an abrupt movement North had leaned forward, letting the fan dangle between his knees and looking straight before him. Lady Karslake leaned back, her face full of faint, wistful sadness, listening, it seemed, dreamily to the music. At last she smiled, a wistful, self-derisive little smile, and turned her head suddenly towards him.

"Dr. Branston," she said, "I'm seized by a most conventional impulse. I want to try a most conventional experiment. Tell me some more about your poor clerk. Only"—her brows contracted peremptorily—"please remember that I am woman enough to be touched by the story, and not scientist enough to dissect it. Ah," she added quickly, as he looked up, "you are not so — brutal — as you choose to make yourself."

There was nothing brutal, there was nothing even hard about the face North turned to her so slowly. It was heavy, disturbed, and gloomy.

"There is not much more to tell," he said gently enough. "He is going into the consumptive hospital to-morrow—it's his only chance."

"And his wife?"

"She will go on in their lodgings in Camden Town."

"Have they any money? What is she like?"

"She is a girl of nineteen. She was a dressmaker. She has—such money as she can earn!"

"I thought so!" exclaimed Lady Karslake, almost delightedly. "Give me her address, Dr. Branston; I shall go and see her."

He looked at her spirited, eager face, almost girlish at the moment in its excitement, and a sad little smile touched the corners of his mouth.

"You won't find it answer, Lady Karslake," he said in a low voice.

"Why, won't she care to see me?" she retorted, and the flickering fun about her mouth and eyes showed that the misunderstanding was wilful.

"She would be delighted, no doubt. It is the experiment I mean. You will only be disappointed."

"I can but try," she said, and through the laughing defiance of her voice there rang a singular earnestness. "Things need a little setting straight with me, and perhaps philanthropy may serve the purpose. Who knows? You don't, I'm sure, for you have never tried."

She rose as she spoke, he followed her example, and as they stood facing one another their eyes met, and the laugh died away from her face. She held out her hand to him with a swift gesture that was full of kindness.

"I hope I have not hurt you," she said.

"No," he answered. "You have not hurt me, Lady Karslake."

Half an hour later, the last of her guests having departed, Mrs. Slade-Fenton turned to Miss Kenderdine with a rather unconvincing air of nonchalance: "Dr. Branston went early," she said.

Miss Kenderdine's face was not pleasant to look upon as she answered shortly:

"Yes, he went directly after that woman! I should like to know, Alice, what in the world induced you to put her next him at dinner!"

"It was an accident," said Mrs. Slade-Fenton, with the irritability of fatigue. "Of course it was an accident. Most unfortunate, certainly! But I don't suppose there's any harm done?"

"I'm not so sure of that," retorted Miss Kenderdine sullenly.

THE DEVIL DANCE OF HEMIS.

There is no country in the world more strange and more fascinating in respect to its religious rites and ceremonials than Tibet. Barren as is the land, and scanty as is the population, religious rites, emblems, and edifices everywhere meet the eye; and even when the traveller crosses the uninhabited regions, where the wild yak, antelope, and kiang roam unmolested, he constantly encounters great caravans of pilgrims, carrying sacred flags, holding praying-wheels in their hands, and marching eagerly to some holy festival which is about to be held at a distant monastery. In the lonely mountain defiles, high up in the regions of ice and snow, great piles of stones are constantly met with, heaped up by pious hands, and surmounted by tall sticks, on which flutter flags marked by prayers and inscribed with sacred sentences. Even the pastoral Tibetans—who live in tents, and wander with their flocks over the great grassy plains of the tablelands—carry praying-wheels in their hands; and fancy, as they ceaselessly turn them round, that they are reciting devout prayers.

But it is in the settled and cultivated portions of Tibet that the signs of the power of religious feeling are visible on every side. The cliffs are hollowed with the cells of hermits, and the dwellings of these anchorites are often seen perched on the very summit of some towering mountain pinnacle, overhanging dizzy precipices. Long lines of flags, on which prayers are written, stretch along the sides of the hills; and the vast numbers of these holy banners, fluttering in the wind, give to many mountain valleys a most extraordinary appearance. In many places, long low platforms, called Manes, are met with. These extend for hundreds of yards, and have most of the stones engraven with prayers; and it is very striking to observe that whenever the Tibetans pass these Manes they are always most careful to leave them on the right hand. Another edifice of a religious character is called Chorten, and these abound in great numbers. They are curious edifices, and sometimes vary in form. They are built of stone with a square or cubical base, above which comes a series of steps, on the top of which stands the larger half of an inverted cone, and the whole is surmounted by a tapering pillar. The aspect of these edifices is graceful and pleasing, and they frequently contain the relics of holy men. Praying-wheels are used by every Tibetan, and whether met in the street, on the mountain-side, or on the pasture lands, the men are almost invariably found twirling their praying-wheels, or hugging them to their bosoms. When a Tibetan house is entered, praying-wheels stand at the door, and are pulled round by strings by all who cross the threshold. Praying-wheels are fixed upon the roofs, so that the wind shall keep them constantly whirling round; and even in the beds of running streams the ingenious and devout Tibetans have placed their praying-wheels, so that the ever-flowing waters may keep the wheels continually turning round.

But of all the wonders of the Tibetan religion, none is so striking as the abundance of monasteries. These great assemblages of religious houses are full of monks or Lamas, and the marvels associated with them are truly surprising. Their number is amazing; they literally swarm in the inhabited portions of Tibet, and a traveller journeying through the country passes monastery after monastery in endless succession. So numerous are they, that Mr. Rockhill, the indefatigable American explorer of Tibet, tells us that while the population of Eastern Tibet is but small, one-fifth of it consists of Lamas. He also says, that in his journey from Jyekundo in Tibet to Ta-chien-lu on the frontier of China, a distance of six hundred miles, he passed thirty-six large monasteries, five of which contained from two thousand to four thousand Lamas. Many monasteries in other parts are equally large. The great

monastery of Kumbum, near the Lake Koko Nor, contains four thousand monks. Chiamdo, which is one of the chief towns in Eastern Tibet, and contains twelve thousand inhabitants, seems to be half composed of a gigantic monastery; and Captain Bower in his recent journey through Tibet passed the large town of Riuchi, which seemed to him to be all monastery. The wealth of some of these monasteries is astonishing. Their splendid gilded roofs are seen glittering in the sun from long distances. Their interiors are often richly adorned and brilliantly coloured, while the secret stores of wealth treasured up in their hidden recesses must be enormous. The endowments of these monasteries are often most valuable. Rich grazing-grounds, cultivated estates, fruit-gardens, and extensive forest tracts, belong to them, and the monks take good care to enforce their rights as to wild animals and birds on their properties. The situations of these monasteries are often most picturesque. Sometimes they stand on a lofty detached pyramid of rock, which rears its giant form in the midst of a cultivated valley. Sometimes they are built upon the tops of cliffs, and crown the highest crags, so that the white houses of the monastery stand out in striking contrast with the black precipices. It may be that a forest is chosen for the site, and as the traveller looks down from the top of some lofty mountain pass on a deep valley full of dark forests, he sees the gilded roofs of a monastery glittering amidst the green foliage, and marks its towers rising above the tops of the trees. A very favourite situation for a monastery is on an island in the midst of some sacred lake, and here the situations chosen for the positions of these monastic establishments are often singularly imposing and beautiful. The wanderer in this strange land gains the crest of some snowy ridge, and sees stretching away for many miles beneath him a lonely lake embosomed in the mountains. The water is deep blue, the sands fringing the shore are pure white, the mountains around though barren are brilliantly coloured, and their upper slopes are robed in pure snow. The air is keen and bracing, the atmosphere is clear as crystal, and the heavens above are of a deep and pure blue. Far out in the midst of the waters of the lake there appears a rocky island, the bottom of the dark cliffs of which is edged with a flickering white line, showing where the waves are breaking. On the very summit of the island are the white buildings of a monastery, the houses of which are piled one above the other in fantastic disorder.

It is a pleasing feature connected with these monasteries, that in the lands belonging to them animal life is strictly protected. The woods and gardens belonging to the monasteries are full of birds, which are wonderfully tame as the monks (Lamas) do not allow them to be killed. On one occasion during his recent journey through Tibet, Captain Bower went out shooting in a beautiful valley, but almost immediately the Tibetans came thronging around him, fully armed, and compelled him to desist. They declared that the lands in which he was shooting belonged to the great monastery of Riuchi, and that the monks of that establishment did not allow any shooting on their lands. The Tibetans further said that if anything were shot on the monastery estates, every soul in the neighbourhood would be struck with sickness.

The aspect of the monks who dwell in these monasteries is most striking. They are dressed in loose robes, which may be either red or yellow-coloured, according to the sect of Lamas to which they belong, and these robes are gathered round the waist by a girdle. On their heads they often wear lofty mitres of true episcopal shape, and at times they may be met wearing red hats with broad brims, which remarkably resemble Cardinals' hats. The praying-wheel is always in their hands, and they often carry curious tridents. On special occasions when great religious festivals take place, the dress of the Lamas is most gorgeous; their mitres are very fine, and their dresses are adorned most brilliantly.

In Eastern Tibet—which is nominally subject to China—the Lamas try hard to exclude all Europeans from entering the monasteries; but in Western Tibet, which forms part of the dominions of the Maharajah of Kashmir, Europeans are allowed to enter the monasteries and to examine them thoroughly. In Western Tibet the wealth of the monasteries has been much reduced through the plunder of their treasures by the Dogra Sikhs. These daring invaders entered Western Tibet about sixty years ago and swept all before them. The timid Tibetans were easily overcome, and submitted, after a brief resistance, to the rule of their new masters. The Sikhs next marched up the Indus into Chinese Tibet, plundering the rich monasteries as they advanced. An immense amount of booty was collected, and the Sikhs appeared to be perfectly invincible. But their success

was drawing to a close. A Chinese army, said to be ten thousand strong, advanced to meet the invaders, and, after some hard fighting, the Sikhs were totally defeated; their General, Zurawur Singh, was killed; and they were driven back into the Ladak territory. The exactions and plunderings of the Sikhs ruined many of the Ladak monasteries, but the great monastery of Hemis is said to have escaped, owing to its having of its own accord supplied the Sikhs with all that they desired. Hemis is one of the largest monasteries in Western Tibet. It contains eight hundred monks, and stands on the southern bank of the Indus, not far from Leh, the capital of Western Tibet; and so great is its extent that from a distance the monastery has the appearance of a small town. In this monastery there is a festival held every year, which is partly a fair and partly a religious ceremonial. Great numbers of Tibetans and Lamas flock to the monastery from all parts of Tibet, and the proceedings last for two days. Mr. Knight, who recently was present at the festival, has given a most interesting account of this strange performance, and his most graphic narrative furnishes the basis of the following brief description.* Hemis monastery stands in a wild, rocky valley, with towering mountains all round, and religious edifices, such as Chortens and Manes, scattered about in the most extraordinary abundance. Mr. Knight's entry into the monastery shall be described in his own words:

"As soon as our party was seen to approach, the monks on the battlements of the lamasery, high above, welcomed us with their weird music from long shawms and cymbals. We now dismounted, and ascended by steps hewn out of the rock to the outer precincts of the gompa, where many tents were pitched and merchants had opened booths to sell their wares to the crowds of chattering, laughing, pig-tailed pilgrims.

"We reached the main gate of the gompa, and here some monks took charge of us and led us to our quarters through that great rambling edifice of weird sights, across strange courtyards fantastically decorated, where huge and ugly Tibetan mastiffs of yellow colour, sacred creatures of the gompa, barked furiously at us as we passed, and strained at their stout chains, eager to fly at the intruders' throats; along dim, narrow alleys, where dripping water turned the praying-wheels, and where hand-wheels and other facilities for devotion met one at every turn; up steep, winding flights of stairs, across wooden galleries overhanging abysses. Everywhere we were surrounded by uncanny objects. The walls were covered with frescoes of grotesque gods and frightful demons; banners with monstrous designs waved over us; and, not the least uncanny, the Red Lamas, with their dark rags and shaven heads, some of them scowling and hang-dog, with not a little 'odium theologicum' and priestly hypocrisy in their expression, kept flitting by us with noiseless footsteps, whispering to one another after the peculiar manner of this country—so low a whisper that no sound was audible even when we were quite near; and it appeared as if they were conversing by watching the silent movements of each others' lips, as do our own deaf and dumb."

The Englishmen were lodged in a high turret of the monastery, from which commanding views were obtained of the wilderness of mountains round them, with their dark chasms and snowy peaks. Everything in the monastery was preparing for the grand performance on the morrow, and a kind of private rehearsal of the ceremony was performed. Early in the morning of the next day the English travellers were aroused by wild music resounding amidst the mountains, and all kinds of musical instruments in the hands of the Lamas, woke the echoes of the romantic valley.

The spectators were assembling, and soon the large quadrangle of the monastery was filled with a dense crowd, and all the roofs and galleries overlooking the courtyard were also covered with people. The scene presented was very extraordinary. The Tibetans had come from all quarters of the country. There were the agriculturists of Ladak, the shepherds of the upland plains, and the wild pastoral nomads from the great table-lands of the almost unknown regions of Chinese Tibet. The dignitaries of the Buddhist religion were well represented. Yellow-dressed Lamas from Eastern Tibet, and even yellow-dressed Nuns, were to be seen side by side with the red-vested Lamas of Ladak. Nor were strangers absent. Hindoos and Mahommedans were plentiful amongst the throng, the Dogra governor of Ladak was also a spectator, and the deposed Rajah of Ladak watched the proceedings from a private box hung with silken draperies. The music from a full band of numerous

* See his most interesting work entitled, "Where Three Empires Meet," chap. xiii.

instruments sounded, and the ceremony commenced.

First, some priests gorgeously dressed, with mitres on their heads, and swinging censers in their hands, danced to slow music. Then the courtyard was filled by a troop of men wearing hideous masks, and dressed so as to represent demons. They howled and yelled in a most hideous manner, and dancing about the courtyard whirled round and round in extraordinary evolutions, while the music of the orchestra became fast and furious. Suddenly the loud and wild music ceased, and a low and solemn chant succeeded. Then a stately procession advanced down the steps, from the inner portion of the monastery, to the courtyard. In the midst of this procession, under a canopy, walked a Lama wearing a mask, the countenance of which was placid and serene. Six other holy men followed him, and these seven leading figures were intended to represent the seven incarnations of Buddha. After these holy men had exhibited themselves for a little time in the courtyard, another change took place in the character of the ceremonial. Some men, almost naked, rushed into the quadrangle, and seemed to be helplessly wandering hither and thither. These were supposed to represent the souls of those who, after death, had no fixed abode, but went roaming aimlessly through the regions of space. Lamas dressed so as to bear the likeness of devils came flocking into the courtyard, and mocked the miserable souls; but every now and then a holy man came forward, and by his powerful spells compelled the demons to retire. A small figure, representing a human corpse, was now laid on the ground in the middle of the courtyard, and the devils, painted as skeletons, danced furiously around it. Armed with swords and lances they struck furiously at it, but never succeeded in actually hitting it, and from time to time they were driven back by some holy Lama, who would sprinkle holy water upon them, and then, with wild shrieks, they would retire. So for hours the wild and fantastic dance went on, the demons circling round the figure of the corpse, and whirling about in the wildest contortions. At last the ceremonial finished for the day, but the visitors amused themselves in revelry all through the night.

The second day's performance was supposed to be still more important than that of the first. There was the usual dancing of masked Lamas, the usual music and chanting, and the usual buffoonery. But the most extraordinary of all the ceremonies, which took place on this day, was the "sin offering." Three richly caparisoned horses were led by gorgeously dressed Lamas into the courtyard. The trappings of the horses were then taken off, and they were dragged to and fro amidst much shouting. Buckets of red paint were then poured over them, and three large Tibetan dogs were also worried and covered with red paint in a similar manner. These animals seem to take the place of the scapegoats among the Jews, and the sins of the Tibetans were supposed to be transferred to the horses and dogs, which at the close of the performance became holy, were exempted from all work, and were the special property of the monastery. This sin offering is repeated in other monasteries during the great festivals, and it often takes different forms. In the holy city of Lhassa there is a great religious festival held every year, which is attended by thousands of Tibetans, who come from immense distances to attend it. The festival lasts for a month, and the sin offering takes place at its close. This consists of a man whose face is painted half black and half white, and who is supposed to bear the sins of the whole city. Dressed in a leather coat the victim is led about the city, followed by a yelling crowd. Finally he is led out of the city to a distant monastery, from which place, if he lives, he may return to the next annual festival, and again bear the sins of the people.

What is the meaning of these extraordinary ceremonies? What particular signification is to be attached to such a rite as the dance of the demons at the festival at Hemis? The Tibetans themselves are ignorant of the meaning of these ceremonies, and if the Lamas understand the significance of all these rites, the secrets are kept from the common people. Perhaps they represent the notions of an ancient Shamanism which was incorporated in later times into the Buddhist faith. Or it may be that they are invented by the Lamas, to show the people how dependent they are on the priesthood for defence against the spirits of evil, which are always assaulting the soul.

AN OLD-WORLD GIRLHOOD.

WHAT is the popular ideal of Mrs. Hannah More? Ask ninety-nine people out of a hundred, and they will tell you that she was an aggressively virtuous old woman in an ugly frilled cap, who was a confirmed

bore in literature, and a generally tiresome specimen of dreary old-maidism.

But turn over the pages of old diaries and forgotten biographies, and you will find that a sweeter, fresher, wittier lass than that arch and naïve Mistress Hannah More who won the hearts of sages and savants when George the Third was King, never stepped out of the chronicles of the past to bewitch the readers of the present.

Did she outlive her charm, and banish by the weight of the monumental works of a later and graver day all memory of her winning girlish graces? Who can say? We only now wonder at the vogue which won for her the handsome income of two thousand pounds in one year, and caused the public to buy up whole editions of her books in four short hours; and to run their favourite works through as many as fifteen editions in England, while America clamoured for and obtained as many as thirty thousand copies of the same dull work.

We read that even when Sheridan's brilliant "School for Scandal" was delighting crowded houses in one part of the town, Mrs. Hannah's didactic pen was potent enough to draw equally large crowds to the play-house where one of her dramas was being enacted.

The nineteenth century will have none of Hannah, and not the wettest day in desolate lodgings would induce the most voracious reader of to-day to tackle the long row of highly improving essays, poems, tales, and plays which bear her name.

Why then did all her contemporaries so prate of her talents, and so love her personality? By what rare art did she hold and keep through a long lifetime all the friends, whose affection she won in early youth by her ardent hero-worship and unselfish enthusiasm? It was simply because the grace of that vanished girlhood never quite forsook the prim old lady of Cowslip Green, and also because the home verdict on her first return from London successes was true of her all her life: "Hannah is perfectly unspoilt in spite of it all."

And what was she like then, this girl who was young and blooming some hundred and twenty years ago in the quiet Gloucestershire home where her father taught a school, and the five happy sisters read together, and dreamed together of the possibility of seeing in the golden future some of the great writers whose works enchained their vivid young imaginations?

The home at Stapleton was a cheerful, but a very frugal one, for there were many to keep and mere luxuries were unknown. Jacob More, the schoolmaster, had married a farmer's daughter of vigorous intellect, who brought her children up well, and early gave them that passionate love of books which was their portion to their dying day. The father was of a respectable Norfolk family, and had stirring tales to tell his girls of his own grandfather, who had been a captain in Cromwell's army. The daughter of this staunch old Presbyterian—Hannah's grandmother—used to tell the child of the trials he had to bear when the hearing of preachers was forbidden, and of how she and the rest of his family used to steal out to "conventicles," while he guarded the door with his drawn sword. To hear these tales from her sturdy old grandmother—a vigorous dame who could boast at eighty that she had risen at four every morning of her life, winter or summer—did Hannah seriously incline; and she loved to sit on her father's knee and urge him to repeat long classic stories in Greek or Latin, "to gratify her ear," before he would give her their English version.

Her cleverness was a delight to the hard-working schoolmaster, and though he disliked all learned ladies, he could not resist the temptation to carry his willing little pupil into the unusual paths of Latin and mathematics. His rapid success with her fairly frightened him, but he could not stop now that he had begun to satisfy the mental hunger of a child who was wont to coax him to tell her "more of Plutarch's wise sayings," whilst his wife aided the girl in her search for knowledge, urging the father to give her plenty of the only thing they had to bestow on their children. In after life Hannah often said that "the best part of a girl's education was an enlightened parent's conversation," and that to her good father she owed the happy balance of mind which kept her free from foolish extremes. There was plenty of food for her mind in the quiet home-life at Stapleton, for her old nurse had lived in the family of the great Dryden, and the girl was never weary of hearing stories of the poet and his sayings, besides poring over his works. With her happy art of picking up promiscuous knowledge, Hannah learnt her remarkably good French from the many officers on parole who frequented her father's house, and she obtained a great deal of general literary knowledge from good Mr. Peach, the Bristol linen-draper who had the honour of being the friend of Hume the historian, and of purging

that illustrious friend's work of no fewer than two hundred Scotticisms.

As a child, she was always scribbling on tiny scraps of paper—paper was dear and scarce in those days—and the poems and stories thus jotted down were modestly hidden by the young author in the corner where the one servant of the house kept her dusters and scrubbing-brushes. At night when she had gone to bed with her little sister, she would fascinate her with long stories, taking up the wondrous tale night after night, and pouring out such a flood of romance that the adoring little Patty—loth to let such thrilling tales perish unread—would steal from her bed and wander downstairs, heedless of the cold, to forage about for scraps of much-coveted paper on which to record the fairy tales she loved and would not willingly let die. No wonder Hannah's earliest dream of bliss was to possess "a whole quire of paper of her very own;" for, when the faithful and adoring little sisters could find no more scraps, her inspiration was checked. She used as a mere baby to play at turning her chair into a carriage and "riding to London to visit Bishops and Booksellers," so early had literary aspirations filled her soul; and when at last the childish dream was fulfilled, and her proud mother did in very truth give her a whole quire of paper, the event was gratefully remembered all her life long.

Hannah attended the scientific lectures of Fergusson, the astronomer, and found that they literally opened new worlds to her eager intellect. When she was sixteen, she heard the elder Sheridan's lectures on Eloquence delivered at Bristol, and some sparkling verses told of the delight they had given. They were shown to the lecturer, and with his quick eye for talent he foresaw her later successes, and asked to be reckoned among her friends.

At the tender age of twelve she was enjoying the wit of the "Spectator," and when the five united sisters started a boarding-school at Bristol—the eldest of the brave sisterhood being then but twenty-one—little Hannah gained all she could from the masters who taught at the little seminary.

By the time she was twenty, she had conquered the difficulties of Italian, Latin, and Spanish, written several poems and tales, and read every book which came in her way. To her, in Mrs. Browning's pretty phrase, "the world of books was all the world," and the ambition of her life was to meet and to talk to "a live author," or to see the great Doctor Johnson and hear him talk while she herself remained unseen in some secret hiding-place. A brief and unhappy engagement to a man nearly twice her age, and "of a gloomy temper," was broken off, and quickly forgotten in her happy and whole-hearted devotion to her home and her books.

A charming and winning young creature she must have been in those days, with her "pretty and vivacious expression, both intelligent and gay, her powdered hair rolled over a cushion, her small delicate mouth, and keen dark eyes," and this was her mien when she and her sister Sally made their first visit to London, and captivated all who saw them by their artless delight in the new world they moved in, and their quick appreciation and ready response to the wit of their new friends

Perhaps, in this receptive and appreciative form of cleverness we may find the key to the secret of Hannah's triumphal progress through the very best of the intellectual society of the day. She had no desire to win attention for herself, to sparkle by her vivacious wit, or attract by her unusually well cultivated intellect, and thus her artlessness had the best effect of art, and secured her a ready welcome from Johnson and Garrick, from Sir Joshua Reynolds, from Percy of the "Reliques," from Mr. Montague, Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Trimmer, and all that was brightest in that famous constellation of "the great and the greatly endowed."

It was to Garrick—then at the height of his celebrity—that the radiant country girl was first introduced, and her account of how his Lear had touched her heart was so natural and spontaneous as to delight the great actor, who soon set himself to make her known to the best and most gifted of his many friends. She was taken to tea at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and there won her way so fast into the good graces of the painter, that he promised to invite her again to meet Johnson, the idol of her girlish adoration. When the great occasion came at last, and the kindly host met her at his door and handed her upstairs, he thought it prudent to prepare her for possible snubbings by warning her that she would find her hero "but a sad and solemn gentleman."

But good luck appears to have always been Hannah's portion, for, on entering the room, she found the Doctor in a merry mood playing with a macaw, and turning to her with a pleasant greeting in the

words of a verse from one of her own poems. There must have been some rare charm for the rugged old man in Hannah's society, for after that happy and never-to-be-forgotten tea-drinking, he sent to bid her come and see him at his own rooms. Thus does sister Sally tell the tale with loving pride to the family at home:

"Miss Reynolds ordered the coach to take us to Doctor Johnson's very own house. Yes! Abyssinia's Johnson, Dictionary Johnson, Rambler's, Irene's, and Idler's Johnson. Can you picture to yourselves the palpitations of our hearts as we approached the mansion? The conversation there turned on his new work on the Hebrides. Miss Reynolds told him of our rapturous exclamations on the road. He shook his head at Hannah, and called her a Silly Thing. When the visit was over the Doctor called for his hat, as it rained, to attend us down a very long entry to our coach, and not Rasselas would have acquitted himself more 'en Cavalier.' I forgot to mention that, not finding Johnson in his parlour when we came in, Hannah seated herself in his great chair hoping to catch a Ray of his Genius. He laughed heartily, and said it was a chair he never sat on, and that it reminded him of Boswell and himself when they stopt a night at (as they imagined) the spot where the Weird Sisters appeared. The idea so worked upon their enthusiasm that it quite deprived them of Rest. However, they learnt next morning to their mortification that they had been deceived, and were in quite a different part of the country."

These letters from Sally to the home sisterhood are delightful reading, not alone from what they tell but from the easy, graphic style of the self-effacing writer. She is but Hannah's shadow and echo—her Boswell, in fact—and a pretty and vivid picture does she draw of the sister she loves so tenderly. She writes of Mrs Chapone and of Mrs. Barbauld, and of their liking for her Hannah; of the visit of the great Burke to see the young women of whom he heard so much; of how Hannah held her own, and won her way with Mrs. Carter herself, unabashed by "the terrors of her piety and learning"; of how they drank a second dish of tea at Sir Joshua's to meet Johnson; and the proud sister records of that evening that "it was Hannah's lucky night. I never heard her say so many good things;" and of the happy day when Johnson invited himself to tea, and to read Hannah's "Sir Edred," for which the fortunate author was offered as much as poor Goldsmith got for the "Deserted Village."

"The tea was very successful," writes Hannah; "though only a tea-visit he stayed till twelve. I was quite at my ease and never once asked him to eat (drink he never does anything but tea), while you, I dare say, would have been fidgetted to death, sending over the town for chickens, and oysters, and asparagus, and Madeira. You see how frugal it is to be well-bred, and not to think of such vulgar innovations as eating and drinking. It is nothing to me now from Johnson but 'Child,' 'Little Fool,' 'Love,' and 'Dearest.'"

He seems to have won from the sisters the simple story of their severe and studious youth, and of the school they kept together.

"I love you both," he cried; "I love you all five. I never was at Bristol, I will come on purpose to see you. What! five women live happily together! I will come and see you. I have spent a happy evening. I am glad I came. God for ever bless you. You live lives to shame Duchesses," and he took his leave with "warmth and tenderness."

Thus did the bright country girl charm the city wits. She had a knack of winning their confidence, and disarming their criticisms, which stood her in good stead amongst such celebrities. Sir Joshua told her how exceedingly mortified he felt when the fine folk, who praised his beautiful picture of the Infant Samuel, wound up their raptures with the careless question, "But who was Samuel?" and Garrick, her first friend, invited her to stay at his pretty villa at Hampton Wick, where his home life with his sprightly wife was the most decorous and regular "No cards, no actors," and literary talk and reading aloud the most exciting amusements. Once a week a "sour crout" party dines there, "all learned men save me," says Hannah; and we hear of Mrs. Garrick, in spite of her "doddering knees," fitting Hannah out for a great assembly "with an elegant cap that she might be quite sure of my being smart." But as she ruefully goes on to say, "how short-lived is all human joy, and what it is to live in the country! I found every human creature in deep mourning, and I, poor I, all gorgeous with scarlet. The mourning, for some foreign Wilhelmine or Jacqueline, was not yet over. I made an apology. There were present Johnson, the Burneys, the Chapones, the Thrales, Pepys, etc.

And even Jacobite Johnson was in deep mourning."

As a rule Hannah donned gauze aprons of her own embroidery on great occasions like this, and we read that one lady who envied her many accomplishments exclaimed: "That you should be able to write such verses, knit such stockings, and embroider such aprons, passes my poor comprehension."

But Hannah did not, in winning the hearty liking of good and clever men, fail to please her own sex also. In her own phrase, she "bore her faculties so meekly" that no one envied her her social successes. From Mrs. Delany, who asked her to the select and celebrated parties of eight where Horace Walpole was always of the company, to quiet Mrs. Trimmer, who invited her to the cottage at Brentford where she lived with her twelve children, and taught her girls to spin, all sorts and conditions of women had a good word for Hannah More. Every one seemed united in desiring to help her to enjoy her London visit. She was taken to see "the young Sheridan's play, 'The Rivals,' which was very unfavourably received the first night. To prevent a total defeat he withdrew it, and made great and various improvements. It is now better, tho' not very much liked." But then "he is only twenty-three."

She was taken to see Pope's villa at Twickenham, and there she frankly owns, "I could not be honest for the world. I stole two bits of stone from the grotto, a sprig of laurel from the garden, and a pen from one of the Bed-chambers." She saw the Palace of Hampton Court, and was more impressed by it than anything else she saw, save the Museum; she met Mr. Delany's delightful Duchess of Portland, known to her as Prior's "noble lovely little Peggy," and she was at the play on the famous evening when Garrick put an end to the silly fashion then prevalent, of covering the head with fruits and kitchen-garden stuff. To Hannah's delight the great actor appeared in a female part with his cap covered with every sort of vegetable, and a bunch of carrots at each ear.

She discussed the books of the day with Johnson, and owns that on one occasion he very severely reproved her.

"I never saw Johnson really angry with me but once," she writes. "I alluded flippantly to some witty passage in 'Tom Jones.' 'I am shocked,' said he, 'to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it—a confession which no modest lady should ever make.'"

She met Boswell at the party of a Bishop, "much disordered with wine," and was addressed by him in such a manner that she felt bound to administer to him a sharp rebuke. She read Gibbon aloud to Mr. Garrick from dinner till tea, and acutely criticised his work and its spirit; she went to the fashionable dinner-parties which began at six, and to the new "thé" parties as introduced by the Duke of Dorset. In fact, she went everywhere and saw everything, but judiciously refrained from seeing too much of any one.

"I always think people will think less of me the more they see of me," she observes with her usual good sense, and although in one of her letters she says she is simply "a large spoilt child," she seems to have returned from her six weeks of happiness as unspoilt as when she left her quiet home, having made troops of friends who were to welcome her back year after year when the gay, good-humoured young enthusiast had blossomed into the "virtuous wit," who never lost the affection of "that parsimonious praiser Johnson," while she swayed society and reformed its manners and morals by her lively writings, and by the quiet force of her noble life given over to good deeds.

UNDER THE YELLOW FLAG.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"How are you? Came round to have a talk—if you're not too busy."

The man to whom this remark was addressed brought down his feet from the office table, sat up, and welcomed the newcomer with a grip of the hand.

"Sit down, old fellow; glad to see you. You'll stay to tiffin? Khan Ali, pegs lao."

Wilton, of the Telegraph Department, did as he was told. Settled himself in a long chair, placed his topee on the ground, and accepted the proffered cheroot.

"Came in on business; something to do, you know. Can't stand the 'long, long day.' Bad enough in India, but it's a thousand times worse here. Got any ice?"

"Sorry the new machine's smashed. These native fellows don't understand working it. Goolzad has promised to get another up from Bombay if we will guarantee to take a certain amount."

"You can put me down for any quantity you like. Life may be worth living in some latitudes, but it certainly isn't in Persia without ice."

Here a tall native appeared, bearing nectar

in the shape of whisky and soda, and for a time silence obtained.

Topics of conversation were few in Bushire. With the thermometer one hundred in the shade—damp heat—any exercise of the brains is a weariness to the flesh. Besides, until the next mail arrived, every item of news had been worn threadbare.

Pelron, of Metz and Company's, placed his legs on the table again, and resumed his occupation of staring at the rafters.

Presently Wilton remarked:

"My brother is coming up next mail."

Arrivals were rare, so for the moment Pelron was interested.

"In the Indian Telegraph, isn't he?" he asked. "What on earth has induced him to come here for the hot weather?"

"You see we've never been separated all our lives. We were at school together, and came out to India together, and when I got transferred to this department, he said he'd apply to be sent here too His application's just been granted, so he'll be up here to-morrow. I'm awfully glad to have him, but he'll find it rather a change from Poona."

"People never know when they're well off. I hated our place in Fenchurch Street, but I'd give a good deal now to have a little London fog and mud instead of all this sand and glare," and Pelron thought regretfully of the day on which he consented, in consideration of his salary being trebled, to represent the firm of Metz and Company in the Persian Gulf.

Another and longer pause, and then Wilton enquired:

"Had any news from Bussorah lately?"

"Absolutely none. Price of cotton going down, I believe."

"I saw in a private message that cholera had broken out; pretty bad, too, but it hasn't been officially reported yet."

"That means quarantine, I suppose; all one's letters smelling of some beastly fumigating stuff, and all the contents of one's parcels ruined."

"If they'd only keep to it, though," said Wilton, who had been out longer than Pelron and knew what cholera meant; "but these Persians evade all quarantine regulations, never come near Bushire town at all, but land at night in native boats lower down the coasts. One hasn't any hold over them."

"Oh, natives are such cowards, they die of anything," said Pelron, who imagined that the characteristics of all Eastern nations were the same. "You never catch anything if you're not afraid of it."

"There's a good deal in that, but still the bravest people don't always escape," said Wilton.

No more was said, till a welcome diversion appeared in the shape of Khan Ali with an attendant satellite to prepare tiffin.

Another weary hour was passed away in abusing Persian cookery, and then the two separated—Wilton to the telegraph offices, five miles away, where he was on instrument duty all the evening, and Pelron to afternoon tea with Mrs. Seton, a pretty grass-widow, whose husband braved the perils of the deep in an Indian marine ship. Wilton the younger arrived next day by the mail steamer; and cholera, though it was not mentioned in the passenger list, came a day later on board a native boat, in company with a crowd of ragged and filthy pilgrims.

When it was firmly established, the authorities ordered a rigid quarantine, on the principle of locking the stable door after the steed has been stolen.

People who went through that weary summer never forgot it. The heat was greater than had been known within the memory of man. The yellow flag waved gloomily over the town, and the natives died like sheep with the rot.

For a while no Europeans in the station were attacked, but one morning the flag half-mast high from the telegraph flag-staff showed that a member of the community had died. It was Brown, a boy of seventeen, who had come out from the Manchester post-office six months before. Too young and delicate to stand the climate, he had gone down before the first breath of sickness, and after eight hours' illness had died.

Brown's death was the first to break the little coterie who inhabited the top rooms of the large telegraph bungalow.

There were four of them—the two Wiltons, Brown, and Cooper—who chummed together; three of these having known each other at home. Every evening they dined together in Brown's room, and wiled away the evening by playing cards and talking over prospects of promotion.

So Brown ceased from being, and the world went on its way; but in a few days' time the younger Wilton sickened, and, after some days' struggle between life and death, through which his brother nursed him devotedly, he died. His old Goanese servant, Pedro, who had been with him since he first landed in India, was terribly cut up by his young master's death. He went about shaking his grizzled head, and lamenting

that it had not pleased the blessed Virgin to take him instead of "chota Wilton sahib."

Finally the poor old man had recourse to the bottle to drown his grief, and by-and-by succumbed to a mixture of heat, apoplexy, and alcohol.

Just at this time Cooper received his long-expected leave, and sailed away down the Gulf rejoicing that he had not left his bones to bleach in a strange land.

Wilton, sick of heart at his brother's death, left the deserted rooms and went to live in Pelron's bungalow, about half-way between the telegraph buildings and town.

The upper part of the place was shut up, but one night Douglas, one of the clerks, going across to the office on duty, noticed a light in the upper storey. Wondering who it could be he went up the stairs, and looking into the room saw, so he asserts, three players seated round the card-table. Two of them he saw distinctly, but the back of the third was turned towards him. Frozen with horror he was unable to stir, and he saw the Wiltons' Goanese boy appear looking as he did in life, carrying a tray of refreshments. Then he made a desperate effort, and, hurrying away at the utmost speed, made straight for Jones's room, where he sank speechless into a chair, and could only be revived after many applications of another form of spirits.

Douglas recounted what he had seen in strict confidence to his greatest chum. "I shouldn't like poor old Wilton to hear about it, you know," he said; but in a very short time the story was common property of the station. The superintendent professed absolute disbelief, and let fall a remark that Douglas had probably been dining. Which remark being duly repeated to Douglas hurt his feelings deeply. He had never been more sober in his life, he declared, and he only hoped the superintendent might never behold the sight he had seen. The faces of those dead men playing cards would haunt him to his dying day.

The summer wore on its weary course. The pestilence increased, reached its zenith, and then mercifully waned, and when the end of September came, the cholera had ceased. Although a great number of natives had died from it, no other Europeans had fallen victims.

The upper part of the telegraph bungalow remained uninhabited; no one would live there. The rooms had been allotted to three young fellows from India, country bred. They declined to inhabit the rooms, preferring the discomfort of chumming with their friends or the expense of a bungalow outside the buildings. Like the Frenchman, they did not believe in ghosts, but were horribly afraid of them.

Young Brown's goods and chattels were sold by auction, the proceeds being just sufficient to pay his bills. Pelron bought several of the things, amongst others a mirror, which he sent his servant to fetch away. The boy appeared in the evening carrying it, and in a state of agitation and alarm.

"Sahib," he began, "I have seen a dreadful sight. 'Inshallah' I may see no more such. I went into the room of Brown Sahib to fetch the mirror. It was nearly dark, but still enough light to make one's way. The room also was empty. I reached the thing down and turned to go, when behold there was a light, and I saw the three dead Sahibs seated playing cards."

"Three dead Sahibs! What are you raving about? Two only died. What folly is this?"

"Three dead Sahibs I beheld, nevertheless. The face of the third was the face of the burra Wilton Sahib, but by Allah it was the face of a corpse."

"Son of a burnt father, go and see no more visions; and if I hear this nonsense repeated you shall have sticks."

"Sahib, I obey; but what is written is written."

"You look fagged, old fellow," remarked Pelron to Wilton a few days later, as the two sat at dinner. "Get the doctor to give you a 'pick-me-up' of some sort. Thank the gods the heat is over at last."

Wilton certainly did look fagged and ill. There was a scared, hunted look in his eyes, too, like that of some trapped animal expecting its death-blow.

"It's not that," he said at last. "You'll only think me a fool if I tell you, but I shan't see the year out."

"Nonsense! Why, the heat's over, and so's the cholera. Quarantine taken off too, and every one beginning to live again."

"It isn't because of the heat or the cholera either. I knew it would come ever since poor Charlie died. We were never separated, you know, and he won't be happy without me. They want me to make up the rubber."

Pelron laid down his knife and fork and gave a whistle.

"Old boy, you're going off your head. For goodness sake, see the doctor at once."

"It's all very well; you may laugh as much as you like, Pelron"—Pelron had been never further from laughter in his life—"but there are 'more things in heaven and earth,' you know. It's all very well for you to be a materialist and all that, but some things you can't explain away. You know that story that Douglas told?"

"The impossible yarn spun by that idiot! He was probably half seas over at the time."

"And there isn't a servant or native anywhere who will go into those rooms after dark."

"Oh! if you've got to that, believing a native's word, you're in a bad way," said Pelron, with undisguised scorn.

"I tell you it was long before Douglas or anybody else said anything about those rooms. And as for believing a native's word, why, I know them as well as you do. What I'm going to tell you is Gospel truth, or I'll affirm it, if that seems more solemn to you. It was just about a week after poor Charlie's death, in the evening and dark, when something—I don't know what—made me walk past the bungalow. I didn't want to, but I felt impelled to go upstairs, and it was so dark I could hardly feel my way. Anyhow, I groped along till I reached Brown's room; I opened the 'chick' doors and went in. It was still pitch dark, but all of a sudden a light seemed to come in the middle of the room. I don't know what caused it, for there wasn't any lamp. Poor Charlie and Brown were sitting at the table, just as we used to sit, and there were two empty chairs, and behind stood old Pedro with the glasses. It looked so real that I forgot all about the cholera and stepped forward to take a hand, but Charlie said: 'Not yet! When the time comes we will send for you.' And then I saw that his eyes were fixed and his jaw dropped, just as on the night he died."

"Hallucinations! You had worked yourself into a fever, and capable of seeing any amount of visions."

"Hallucination or not, I saw it all distinctly. And that is not all; as I continued looking I saw myself sitting on one of the chairs, but I was dead too, and my eyes fixed like the others. My time will come soon. Every night I lie awake I wonder when they will send for me."

"No wonder, man, you see visions, and dream dreams if you lie awake. Sleeplessness is enough to account for every ghost under the sun. I'll give you some stuff the doctor made up for me the other day, and I'll engage you don't get any summons from the lower regions."

Wilton obediently took the sleeping draught and consented to see the civil surgeon, who prescribed him a course of quinine and iron. The autumn gave place to winter. The cold weather, just cold enough to make a good fire enjoyable, with its brilliant sunshine gave every one a new lease of life. Two gunboats stationed in the harbour did much towards enlivening society, and cricket-matches and riding-parties were the order of the day. Wilton continued to put up with Pelron, but since that night nothing further was said about his vision. Indeed, he appeared to have completely forgotten it, and had quite recovered his spirits and health. He never mentioned his brother's name, and daily expected to have a year's furlough granted, eagerly making his plans as to how and where he should spend it. The rooms in the telegraph bungalow, newly whitewashed and done up, were given to a fresh batch of telegraphists imported from home by the cable steamer, and the ghosts seemed effectually laid. At all events, nothing more was heard or seen of them.

One afternoon Pelron and Wilton, returning from a long ride, were walking their horses over the Maidan just outside Bushire town. They were busily discussing their prospects of success in the next day's cricket-match—Bushire versus The Navy. Wilton, an enthusiastic cricketer, was expounding his theory that no bluejacket could ever be an expert bowler, when he suddenly stopped his horse, and left his sentence unfinished.

Pelron, a pace or two ahead, looked round.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Wilton sitting motionless on his horse, gazed fixedly at the sea beyond the Maidan, and made no answer.

"Are you ill?" asked Pelron.

"Did you see him?" he answered, in a low voice.

"See whom?" said Pelron, looking round. "What are you talking about? There's nobody in sight."

They were in the centre of the Maidan, not a soul was visible in that dreary expanse of sand, and there was no cover behind which a dog could hide.

"It's come at last," muttered Wilton to himself, and then aloud to his companion: "It was Pedro who stopped me; he took hold of my horse's bridle and said, 'Salaam, Sahib.'"

Pelron looked at him closely, but he was still gazing far away into vacancy.

"Come on," he said. "We shall never reach Bushire at this rate."

No further words were spoken, and as soon as the town was reached, Pelron went to the civil surgeon's house. The doctor was out, so Pelron left a message asking him to come at his earliest convenience to have a look at Wilton, who was, he said, a bit "off colour."

That night, soon after dinner, Wilton, who had been in the best of spirits, and had apparently forgotten the incident on the Maidan, said he was tired, and would go to bed. "I want to be fit for the match to-morrow. Good night, old fellow."

An hour or so later the civil surgeon arrived, and after some talk and refreshment went to see Wilton. An exclamation a few seconds later brought Pelron to the room.

The bed had not been disturbed, and Wilton, fully dressed, was sitting in a chair.

"I found him like this," said the doctor; "he must have been dead at least an hour."

There was a post-mortem, at which two doctors from the gunboats in harbour assisted the civil surgeon. Being unable to find any cause whatever for Wilton's death, they, after much disagreement, gave it as their opinion that he had died of heart disease.

An English coroner's jury would probably have given it, "Died by the visitation of God."

Possibly there are "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of" in our latter-day science.

TRADE-TEACHING IN GERMANY.

The extent to which what is called Technical Education is carried on in Germany is little realised by the plain Briton. It is possible that our German cousins may be attempting too much in endeavouring to condense the teaching of a lifetime into the period of a school course, but many of their so-called Technical Schools are really workshops in which the scholars are unpaid apprentices—paying, indeed, something analogous to the "premium" required in some occupations here.

The Technical High School of Brunswick, for instance, has six branches in which are taught respectively architecture, engineering, engine-building, technical chemistry, and pharmacy. Each student must not be less than seventeen years old on entering, and must pass a preliminary examination to show that he has some knowledge of the subject in which he desires to become proficient. He has to pay for his board, and a small fee for each lecture and each practical exercise attended, but he has the free run of an extensive library and of countless appliances.

The practical value of these Technical Schools has been sometimes questioned in this country, but German manufacturers are so convinced of the value of them that, it is said, they would support them themselves if State and municipal aid were withdrawn. A branch which has of late years been added to the Brunswick High School is peculiarly German in object and character. It is to assist the rising industry of beet-sugar. A special course is devoted, under experts, to all products employed in the manufacture of sugar, to all the stages of manufacture, and to all the by-products and their uses. The cultivation of the beet is minutely studied, and the studies are facilitated by frequent excursions to beet-farms and sugar-factories.

Then there is another school in Brunswick, subsidised by Government, which is called the School for Sugar Industry. This is really a training shop for workers in sugar factories who desire to add scientific to their practical knowledge of the industry.

The Royal Industrial School of Plauen is another composite institution designed to further the industries of Saxony. The city gave the land and the State erected the building, besides paying for its maintenance. Plauen ascribes its high reputation for laces and embroideries to this school, for previously it was a place of small industrial importance. There are three departments—a school of drawing and painting, with a class for weaving and mechanics; a school for manufacturers; and a school for female instruction. In the first are taught drawing and painting from nature and from models for designs for weaving, also practical weaving in all its branches, and knowledge of the construction and management of the machines. In the second is taught the technique of manufacturing as a trade, including the accurate calculation of costs. In the third, girls are taught sewing, embroidery, cutting-out, machine-work, millinery, and so on. It is claimed that when a young man has graduated at such a school as this of Plauen, he is qualified to take his place as manager of a factory, bringing to his employer knowledge both of practical mechanics and practical business, as well as ability to design and to control and correct

the designs of others. However this may be, it is noteworthy that large numbers of the designers and managers in the textile factories of the United States are of German birth and education.

In Saxony, too, is the only Tanning School in the world. It is situated at Freiburg, and was established in 1889 with the object of arresting the decay of tanning as an industry in the German Empire. It is supported partly by the State, partly by the city, and partly by private generosity, and it is very much assisted by presents of hides, barks, and other material from Germans interested in its welfare. Its scholars come from all parts of the world, although we believe there is a movement to exclude in future all but Germans from its benefits. The school building is fitted throughout with all kinds of machinery connected with the manufacture and furnishing of leather. It is, in fact, a composite factory as well as a complete tannery.

The students have to attend classes and work up papers in organic and inorganic chemistry, physics, mechanics, mathematics, book-keeping, commerce, etc., but they have to spend a large part of their time in the tannery and laboratory. Besides an efficient staff of teachers, there is a corps of practical tanners, who put the raw hide through every process before the student until it is a perfect piece of finished leather. Not only that, but the processes of the old system and the new system of tanning are shown side by side, and every known description of tanning material is brought in for practical test.

The school week is thus divided. Tanning and preparation of hides and leather, twelve hours; chemistry and physics, in special relation to tanning, ten hours; book-keeping, two hours; commerce and exchange, two hours; arithmetic, two hours; correspondence, one hour; drawing, three hours; mechanics, two hours. In addition, excursions are made from time to time to selected tanneries, to the woods to study growing bark, to merchants' stores to examine material as brought to market, and to experimental stations where tests are in progress.

Take again another unique institution, the Clock School of Furtwangen, in the Black Forest. This was instituted in 1877 by the Grand Duke of Baden, in the hope of arresting the destruction of the old Black Forest industry of clock-making. The idea was to combine wood-carving with clock-making, and so to restart the industry on a new and higher basis, and it seems to have been very successful, for Furtwangen has embarked on a new era of prosperity.

And this is the method pursued. The school courses cover three years—preparatory, clock-making, and supplementary. In the first course—besides instruction in physics, arithmetic, and drawing—the students are taught the preparation of material, and the uses of electricity. In the next two courses they are taught how to make clocks, watches, chronometers, measuring instruments—in fact, the whole mystery of the craft. The tuition costs only some thirty shillings per annum, and there are scholarships for which periodical examinations are held.

There are several Weaving Schools in Germany; one of the most famous of all, perhaps, being that at Mülheim on the Rhine, although that at Crefeld may be more elaborately equipped. The Mülheim school was founded in 1852, and has turned out, it is said, about two thousand practical experts now directing or managing weaving factories in all parts of the world.

A similar school was established in 1857 at Chemnitz, and these two schools, unlike some of the others in Germany, aim at individual rather than class instruction. A boy may be trained to be a manager, or a master-workman, or a designer, or a "fixer" of weaving machines; or he may be trained as a travelling buyer or seller in the cloth trade. The students are for the most part the sons of manufacturers, managers, mechanics, and operative weavers; and the Professors are reputed to be not only qualified teachers, but men qualified to leave the class-room and "run" a weaving factory anywhere if called upon. The programme of the Chemnitz school courses is before us as we write, and its characteristic is thorough and minute practicality. It is not confined to Germans, but foreigners pay a little more than natives—twenty guineas as against about thirteen. But Crefeld has already closed her technical schools against foreigners, and the others will probably follow.

At Spremberg, in Prussia, is a Government school for woollen-weaving, which has an evening and a Sunday course for those who desire to add scientific knowledge to their daily work at the looms. The plan of study is divided into—knowledge of materials, science of manufacture, use of tools, practical work, mathematics of weaving, commercial knowledge, drawing and designing, and chemical technology.

Under chemical technology are lectures, dictations, laboratory work, qualitative analyses, analyses of water, fats, oils, acids, dyes, thickening materials; in fact, everything required in the process of making woven cloth. There is a large library, a great collection of samples, and a gathering of all kinds of machines and looms, from the earliest obtainable to the latest produced.

It is in schools like these that the modern German craftsmen are trained. It may be said, of course, that these are not really seminaries, but factories for youthful labour—a mere elaboration of the old apprentice system. However that may be, the effect is seen in the economy of production, whereby Germany can manufacture so many things cheaper than any other country. There are many things "made in Germany" that cannot be classed as cheap rubbish.

The "Technicum" of Mittweide, in Saxony, is another peculiarly German institution, and is placed in the centre of a busy industrial district. The Technicum, or School of Technology, was founded in a small way in 1867, and now has an average of over one thousand students from all parts of Germany, and, indeed, from all parts of the world. Its avowed object is "to teach the technology of machinery, to fit young men for practical work in engineering and mechanics of all kinds, from the filing of a piece of iron to the calculation of scales, cranes, and bridges." The classes are divided into an engineering and mechanical school for engineers, workers in electricity, builders of machinery of all kinds, tool-making, manufacturers, and for those who desire to take part in the production and distribution of machine-made goods; and a school for master-workmen in the engineering trades, and for those who want to connect themselves with electricity.

It is explained by one who has recently visited this school, that "a scientific and valuable training in electrical technology is only possible to persons who have made a good course in mathematics, mechanics, chemistry, physics, and especially machine-building. Persons, therefore, contemplating a course in electrical technology are put into the engineering and mechanical school during the third and second last half-years, and into the master-workman's school during the last half-year."

For the benefit of the electricity students a fine new building, called the "Practicum," has been recently added. It is a workshop for practice in everything connected with electricity, fitted up so as to economise time and labour in every way, and to illustrate every theory as yet evolved. This association of the Technicum with the Practicum is characteristic of the modern German system of education.

While the instruction at these institutions is designed to be thoroughly practical, it is obvious that a great deal depends on the masters or Professors. And a fault not uncommon to the system is that a reputation often survives a personality, that is to say, that a school may flourish in indifferent hands on the fame of the work of eminently clever or profoundly expert founders. But this is a fault to which all educational establishments are more or less liable.

The schools we have been describing relate to the producing crafts, but there are also schools for what we call "the trades," as distinguished from "the industries." Thus there are schools for carpenters, masons, and builders, in which it is designed to give the young men just such training as will make them, at the end of their apprenticeship, fully qualified artisans. In some of the cities the employers now make it a condition of apprenticeship that the boys shall attend these schools. They give a good, practical, general education as well as special instruction in the respective trades.

At Aue, in Saxony, a plumber's school was instituted in 1877, the purpose of which is "to give young men intending to take up plumbing, or any branch of the trade, such theoretical and practical knowledge as will make the apprentice period pleasant and profitable." As far as one can gather, the real object is to turn out an expert plumber in the shortest possible time. The German scientific bias is perceptible in the curriculum. The course includes physics and the peculiarities of liquid and gaseous bodies, chemistry, geometrical structure, as well as practical work in wood-turning, tool-making, pipe-laying, and so on. Another class is devoted to metal-work and the making of utensils.

Concerning the utility of such schools, the following is the opinion of Mr. J. C. Monaghan, of Chemnitz, who has spent much time in visiting and examining them for the Educational Department at Washington. He says: "The graduate from such a school brings to the shop an enthusiasm and attention, a knowledge and skill, that aid his employer and himself. The division of labour to-day is so complete that apprentices

in large shops have very seldom an opportunity to learn a trade thoroughly. They learn only a part—some special branch. Of the whole they have hardly an idea. In small shops masters seldom teach a lad much before the last year. The Aue school puts it into the boy's power to learn everything, and puts it out of the master's power to keep much from him. An Aue graduate can take up any branch of the plumber's trade and learn it in a short time. The purpose of the school is to bring out and build up all that is best in a boy's nature, to inspire a love for his work, to give him just such knowledge as will make him understand and do even the most difficult work. Not only the practical or utilitarian side of the trade is shown to him, but also its scientific and artistic phases, its relations to art and architecture, and its importance to sanitation."

No doubt some people say that such institutions teach more scientific conceit than practical expertness; but as to that we offer no opinion. Obviously there must be good and bad students, as there are good and bad workmen; and it must be always difficult to discriminate between the effects of a system and the defects of the subject.

There are numerous agricultural schools, allied with which are a class of "Wanderlehrer," or wandering teachers, whose mission is to go from place to place in the agricultural districts, lecturing and experimenting on agricultural and horticultural subjects. The agricultural schools are, however, permanent institutions in various parts of the Empire, at which the sons of farmers, and others desirous of learning farming, are given an education calculated to fit them to be good farmers. In some cases the course is complete in two terms, during which the student has lessons in geometry and field surveying, drawing, geology, geography, climatology, natural history, zoology, natural philosophy, physics, agricultural chemistry, science of agriculture, book-keeping, land laws, horticulture, and arboriculture.

Rather a large order this for two terms of six months each, and therefore, as regards the scientific work, we may assume that the students only get a smattering. But the instructions in practical farming, and the open-air illustrations generally, with experiments in field work and gardening, must be of great value. In fact, it is the practical work of all the Technical Schools of Germany that impresses one most favourably. Of the agricultural schools in Saxony, Mr. Monaghan writes: "These schools are in no sense agricultural colleges. They are part of the practical public school system. They are simply places to work for useful knowledge. They are so close to the people, and do their work so quietly and well, that they are now indispensable."

Let us now take a look at another class of German institutions, the establishments for the manufacture of clerks, traders, and merchants.

First in importance is the Union for Commercial Clerks at Hamburg, which boasts that in the forty years of its existence it has placed out in the world forty thousand efficient young men. It originated in a scheme for helping youths out of employment to find situations, and has developed into a great supplying institute to which the commercial progress of Germany during the last generation or so is largely ascribed. It has insurance, sick, and superannuation funds, as well as departments for the improvement of apprentices, and schools for thoroughly commercial and linguistic instruction, with a newspaper, an employment register, an annual course of lectures, etc.

At Chemnitz is a Commercial Union which is more in the nature of a Trade Union Club, but at Nürnberg is one which goes in zealously for education as well. At Leipsic is one of more recent date than that of Hamburg, but quite as large in its aims, and with one of the most beautiful buildings in the city as its habitat.

The German Commercial High School is a different affair. These schools are now to be found all over the Empire, and that at Leipsic may be taken as a type. It was instituted by the Merchants' Guild in 1831, but several years ago came under the Chamber of Commerce, subject to the authority of the Department of the Interior. The school course is for three years, during which the boys are supposed to receive the very best training for mercantile careers, as well as a good all-round non-classical education. The obligatory studies include English, French, mathematics, arithmetic, physics, mechanical technology, chemistry, practical knowledge of commodities, commercial science, commercial law, counting-house work, correspondence, book-keeping, political economy, geography, history, writing, drawing, and gymnastics. Spanish, Italian, and shorthand, are optional, but special attention is devoted to English and French, as in Germany great importance is attached to modern languages in commercial equipment.

This fact, and the effects of these train-

ing-schools, account for the large number of German clerks to be found in English and French counting-houses. At Leipsic entrants must be not under fourteen years of age; the entrance fee is ten shillings, and the tuition costs about seventeen guineas per annum. The pupils either live with their friends or are boarded with the teachers on reasonable terms.

But the Commercial High Schools are clearly not for the poorer classes. For these, again, are Mercantile Apprentice Schools, called "Fortbildung," to which scholars go for two or three years after ending their course at the common schools. There are several different kinds of "Fortbildung," but upwards of one hundred and sixty are purely commercial in character, supported jointly by the State, the City, and the Unions, as distinct from the State schools.

The Mannheim "Fortbildung" is considered a model one. It has usually from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty students learning French, English, book-keeping, commercial arithmetic, and much else. But in the Kiel school more attention is paid to English and Danish than to French; in Lubeck more to Danish than to either English or French; in Konigsberg more to Russian; in Emden more to Dutch; in Frankfort-on-the-Main more to French, than to anything else. In short, the character of the education varies with the locality of the school, but always with a commercial object in view.

The system may not be a perfect one—it is not our purpose here to criticise—but like German education in general it is essentially practical.

SO WELL MATCHED!

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE shadows were lengthening across the smooth lawn before Cicely's drawing-room windows, when the General and Leo entered the garden the following day.

They had come by the short cut through the fields, and found the girl and her aunt sitting under the great chestnut-tree, now a mass of snowy blossom in the golden afternoon sunshine. The General carried himself if possible more erect than ever, and wore a flower in his button-hole—an unwonted concession on his part to the softer side of human nature.

Miss Langley rose to receive them with a gracious smile, and a somewhat heightened colour; and the General noted her change of complexion with satisfaction, and felt his heart warm towards her. It was long since he had observed such signs of emotion at his presence.

"We are, I fear, a little before our time," he said, retaining the plump white hand she gave him a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. "But a lover's impatience, you know"—Miss Langley withdrew her hand hastily—"that fellow Leo would give me no peace."

"Don't believe him, Miss Langley; he started before I did," Leo broke in, anxious to avert the usual remarks since Cicely resented them so greatly. "If we are too early, it's the General's fault, not mine."

"You have come just at the right time," the lady said reassuringly. "Cicely was expecting you half an hour ago, but of course under the circumstances her calculations were scarcely to be relied upon."

"Why, aunt, and you yourself sent me to the garden gate nearly an hour ago to see if they were coming," the girl exclaimed, with an irrepressible little laugh.

"I saw you wanted a vent for your impatience, my love. It was natural, quite natural, under the circumstances. Ah, General, we can only be young once in our lives."

"That's true, and more's the pity. Fortunately, we can always be attractive, madam—some of us, I mean," he added hastily, as he caught Cicely's mirthful eyes fixed upon him.

"Attractiveness is but a poor thing in itself," and she shook her head sadly. "The candle attracts the moth, but it is to his destruction."

"But you would never attract like that." It certainly did not seem probable. "You're too good a sort, Miss Langley, to play the dev—ahem!—the fool with a man in that way. I don't believe you ever sent a fellow to the dogs, even in your young days."

"I fear, I very greatly fear, that I did not always seek to be an influence for good."

"Quite right, too. The influence that thinks a lot of itself defeats its own object. I remember my own mother——"

Perhaps Miss Langley was not specially interested at that moment in the General's own mother; but whatever her private feelings may have been, she listened politely to all he had to say on the subject, and the conversation flowed pleasantly on, unimpeded by the young people, who had their own more important matters to attend to.

"So you were in no hurry to come?" Cicely's voice sounded mockingly in Leo's

ear as he stood somewhat apart, leaning against the great chestnut-tree.

He turned to her with a smile—a smile that concealed the pain he was too proud to let her see.

"I feared I might bore you—before the time," he replied carelessly.

"Very kind, I'm sure. But when it's to be for years, a few minutes can't make much difference one way or the other."

"But it needn't be for years. The remedy is in your own hands. You can get rid of me by a word if you choose."

"And be called a jilt for my pains? Thank you, no. People would talk, and it would be too unpleasant."

"And is that your only reason——"

"Leo, my boy, Miss Langley was asking me—oh, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to interrupt you."

"It doesn't matter, General," and Cicely turned to him with a radiant smile, "we were not discussing anything of the slightest consequence."

Leo turned away, a mocking smile on his lips, grief and despair in his heart.

She did not, could not, love him. Better put an end to the dreary farce of their engagement, since she evidently lacked the courage to do so.

The little party that gathered round the dinner-table that evening was a very lively one; and yet there was something strained and unnatural about the mirth, or so it seemed to Cicely. Even the General, though he told several of his best stories—of which one at least was new to the ladies—was not quite his simple, jovial self; while Leo's high spirits and brilliant sallies caused her quite as much wonder as admiration. His laughter did not ring true, and it was louder and more frequent than was natural to him. She was conscious of strongly repressed emotion in the air; she did not understand it, and it made her uncomfortable, so that she was glad when it was time to retire to the drawing-room. Presently, she thought, the General would be occupied with Aunt Maria, and she would have Leo all to herself, when she would soon tease him out of this strange mood of his.

She left Miss Langley sitting in the lamplight at the further end of the room, and, seating herself at the piano near a window that opened into the garden, began to play.

Presently the General entered, and going up to Miss Langley proceeded to make himself agreeable to her so far as he knew how. Cicely smiled delightedly, though there was no one near to share her enjoyment. Her plot was succeeding beyond her wildest hopes; scraps of conversation reached her attentive ears through the soft strains of her music, and she wished Leo would come that he too might hear.

"Lonely? I believe you!" said the General emphatically. "Except for that boy, Leo—and my old bull-dog—there isn't a soul in the world that cares for me. Oh, Miss Langley, it's very good of you to say so. Eh? I'm not so sure of that. Weather-beaten old soldier—charming woman—too good for me."

Yes, the General was certainly coming on admirably.

From where she sat, Cicely could not see the couple at the further end of the room, but she heard her aunt's voice speaking softly though she could not distinguish words, and then the General's louder tones—"No; nothing but my pension, you know. No great catch for anybody; but if you'll have me, Maria——"

A tap at the window arrested her attention.

Leo was standing there, his face very pale, and all the excitement gone out of it; his figure vaguely visible in the fading light.

She rose, and opening the window, stepped out beside him.

"Oh, Leo! he's done it!" she cried, her voice trembling with suppressed laughter. "Your uncle has actually proposed to her. But what is the matter? Why don't you laugh?"

"Cicely, come for a turn in the garden," he said very gently. "I want to talk to you."

But a perverse spirit took possession of Cicely, for she remembered that he had taken things too much for granted in the past, and she had not yet completed his lesson on the subject.

"Too cold!" and she shook her head with a laugh. "I don't feel like it, Leo. Go and have your smoke if you can't exist without it."

"You will not come? Cicely, if you have any love for me at all—no matter how little—don't refuse me this."

"What nonsense! I don't know whether I love you or not. I can't answer riddles on the spur of the moment, and it's very chilly out here;" and with a coquettish nod she left him, and turned back into the drawing-room.

When she glanced at the window a moment later he was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

It was some half-hour later; and still Cicely sat at the piano idly playing one piece after another, and still Leo had not appeared.

It was very strange of him, she thought; but then he had been rather strange lately, seeming to expect more of her somehow than in former days; not at all contented with the old unsentimental relations from which, as he said, they had drifted into this engagement.

And she? Was she satisfied with them herself? She hardly knew; but she was conscious of a growing discontent with life in general, though she had not gone so far as to attribute it to any particular cause. Leo, in this new phase, interested her more than he had ever done before, and—despite her wilful refusal of his petition—he had scarcely gone before she wished him back again. Why had she refused? She could have given no reason; probably had no reason to give. The natural perversity of a spoilt child; the instinctive coquetry of a woman who begins to realise her power, but has not yet learned to use it with womanly moderation; both urged her to refuse a request she would gladly have granted, while pride and shyness alike prevented her from yielding to the first impulsive wish to follow her lover, and assure him that after all she did—perhaps—love him a little.

So she played on mechanically, falling gradually into a brown study as she did so; from which she was presently aroused by the entrance of a servant.

"A note for you, miss;" she said as she presented it.

Cicely took the note, and opened it hurriedly.

What could Leo be writing about when he was actually in the house with her?

The note was a short one.

"I release you from your engagement. You don't care for me, and I have no right to spoil your life. Better that people should talk a little now, than that you should be miserable always; and my uncle shall know that we part by mutual consent. I leave England at once, and it will be long before we meet again. Cicely, I love you too well to keep you to a promise that I ought never to have asked. The fault is all mine, and it is right the pain should be all mine also. You are free; but I—I love you, dear, I love you; and shall always be yours. "Leo."

Cicely read it through; while her heart beat fast, and her eyes filled with tears.

How could he have mistaken her so? How could he have doubted——

Oh; how foolish—how heartless—she must have seemed to him! Why had she not realised what she was doing? Why had she not known——

And he was going away—now—at once. Oh, there was no time to be lost!

She rose quietly, and taking up a shawl of her aunt's that was lying on a chair near her, went out into the garden.

She must see him at once; to-night: perhaps by to-morrow morning it would be too late; perhaps it was too late even now.

Cicely ran quickly across the lawn, and down the shady path that led to the fields, where Leo and she had so often met—where, perhaps, they were never to meet again! The thought seemed to lend her wings, and her hurrying feet flew over the dewy grass; while her fears flew faster still, and already she saw him in imagination leaving the home that she had made intolerable to him, and driving along the dusty roads to the little country station, and the great world in which there was no place for her.

Faster and faster she flew over the moonlit fields, and now the gate was close before her on which she had leant while she talked to him that sunny morning centuries ago—or was it only yesterday?

Suddenly she stopped, for some one was leaning over the gate now just as she had leant that day. It was a man that stood there in the soft splendour of the moonlight, and his head was bowed on his arms, not held proudly erect as hers had been in the joyous spring sunshine.

"Leo!" she cried breathlessly, and sprang towards him.

He raised his head and looked at her with bewildered, miserable eyes.

"Cicely! you here? Why have you come?" His voice sounded hoarse and unnatural, and he laid his hand on the gate as though to steady himself.

"To tell you it's all a mistake—your letter, I mean. Oh, you must not go away!"

"There's no other way out of it. I have thought and thought, but this is the only thing to be done."

"But—if it is all a mistake, Leo? If I love you—not a little, oh, not a little! but with my whole heart! Is there no other way out of it then?"

"Cicely, are you sure? Oh, my darling, don't play with me!"

"I love you," she sobbed. "I have come to tell you so. Oh, Leo, I ran all the way, I was so afraid I should be too late!"

He caught her in his arms, and kissed her passionately; and she clung to him, and for a while there was silence broken only by the glorious serenade a sweet-voiced nightingale was singing to his lady-love.

Presently she told him it had been all a mistake, and he mustn't leave her, for she did love him—oh, very, very much!—and if he wasn't tired of her——"

"Tired of you, darling? never!"

"Then don't go away, or if you must——"

"Yes?"

"Take me with you," she whispered very softly, though there was no one to hear but her lover and the nightingale, who was fully occupied with his own love affairs.

"Yes, dearest; as soon as ever you like. When shall it be?"

And before he turned to walk home with her, she had told him that perhaps—if he wished it very, very much—it should be before the summer was over.

Meanwhile Miss Langley and the General had begun to wonder at Leo's prolonged absence.

"And Cicely, too! I did not observe that she had gone out. It is really time they returned."

"It's very kind of them, Maria," said the General, with his jovial laugh. "They knew by experience that they might be de trop, and so——but here they are. What have you been doing all this while?"

"Listening to the nightingales, and admiring the moonlight," said Leo mendaciously.

"Ah, young people, young people! moonlight and nightingales are all very well at your age, but at ours—give us cheerful lamp-light and comfortable easy-chairs. Leo, congratulate me; Cicely, give us your blessing. Miss Langley has undertaken to make me the happiest man in the world. I owe it all to you, my boy!"

"How you do run on, General," Miss Langley observed, with a complacent smile.

"Dear auntie, I am so glad."

"I wish you joy, uncle."

"Yes, it's settled, day fixed, and all; no half measures for me, sir. Now, Leo; no more shilly-shallying. These things can soon be arranged when you give your mind to it. We are to be married in July. Why not make a double wedding of it?"

"Coulda't wait, General! We are to be married in June."

"Eh? you don't say so. We might hurry up a bit, or—but the ladies must settle that. Yes, we'll leave that to them. Ah, Leo, we've always said that you and Cicely were just made for each other! Haven't we, Maria?"

"Yes, sir; and Cicely and I were saying only yesterday that we never knew any couple so well matched as you and Miss Langley. Weren't we, Cicely?"

And Cicely did not deny it.

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

Ask your Grocer for

Crosse & Blackwell's

FRESH FRUIT JAMS & JELLIES,

which are made from Freshly Gathered Fruits and Refined Sugar.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, LIMITED.

SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

If you had all the KNOWLEDGE, HONOUR, WEALTH, or the highest social position of this WORLD, at your command, you must be measured by the HEART, which *should be* HUMBLE, HONEST, and KIND, for this is NOBILITY of MAN.

NOBLE EXAMPLES SET BY THE GREAT AND GOOD DO NOT DIE!

"THE FIRST TEST OF A TRULY GREAT MAN IS HIS HUMILITY."—RUSKIN.



THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

"The drying up of a single Tear has more of honest fame than Shedding Seas of Gore."

"It is very characteristic of the late Prince Consort—*a man himself of the purest mind, who powerfully impressed and influenced others by sheer force of his own benevolent nature*—when drawing up the conditions of the annual prize to be given by Her Majesty at Wellington College, to determine that it should be awarded **Not to the Cleverest Boy, nor the most Bookish Boy, nor to the most Precise, Diligent, and Prudent Boy, but to the Noblest Boy, to the Boy who should show the most Promise of becoming a Large-Hearted, High-Motived Man.**"—SMILES.

As Time rolls his ceaseless course, Christmas after Christmas comes round, and we find our joys and sorrows left behind; so we build up the being that we are.

What Makes a Happy Christmas? Health, and the Things we Love, and Those Who Love Us.

What higher aim can man attain than conquest over human pain?

EVERY TRAVELLING TRUNK AND HOUSEHOLD OUGHT TO CONTAIN A BOTTLE OF

ENO'S "FRUIT SALT."

IMPORTANT TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.—Don't go without a bottle of ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." It prevents any over-acid state of the blood. It should be kept in every bedroom, in readiness for any emergency. Be careful to avoid rash acidulated salines, and use **ENO'S "FRUIT SALT"** to prevent the bile becoming too thick and (impure) producing a gummy, viscous, clammy stickiness or adhesiveness in the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal, frequently the pivot of diarrhœa and disease. **ENO'S "FRUIT SALT"** prevents and removes diarrhœa in the early stages. Without such a simple precaution the jeopardy of life is immensely increased.

SMALL POX, SCARLET FEVER, PYÆMIA, ERYSIPELAS, MEASLES, GANGRENE, and almost every mentionable disease.—"I have been a nurse for upwards of ten years, and in that time have nursed cases of scarlet fever, pyæmia, erysipelas, measles, gangrene, cancer, and almost every mentionable disease. During the whole time I have not been ill myself for a single day, and this I attribute in a great measure to the use of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT,' which has kept my blood in a pure state. I recommended it to all my patients during convalescence. Its value as a means of health cannot be over-estimated.—April 21, 1894." A PROFESSIONAL NURSE.

Prepared only at ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, LONDON, S.E., BY J. C. ENO'S PATENT.

F. W. EVANS & CO., LIMITED, CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.

RWICK'S BAKING POWDER. ... can buy.

Third Series

JANUARY, 1895.

CONTAINING THE NUMBERS DATED Dec. 8, 15, 22, & 29, 1894.

VOL. 12

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 72.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Prisoners of Silence. A Serial Story 529, 553, 577, 601	
A Day among the Chilterns	534
A Century of Feminine Fiction	537
Achievements of Modern Engineering	540
In County Fermanagh ...	557
The Death-watch. A Poem ...	563
The Wages of Self-Denial. A Complete Story	563
David Crowhurst's Ordeal. A Story in Six Chapters	545, 573, 593, 617
Two Presidency Capitals ...	569
Another Batch of Traditions	582
In the Days of the Grand Tour	585
A Very Modern Historian. A Complete Story	589
Incredulity	606
"Thrift." A Complete Story ...	610
The Happy Land	614

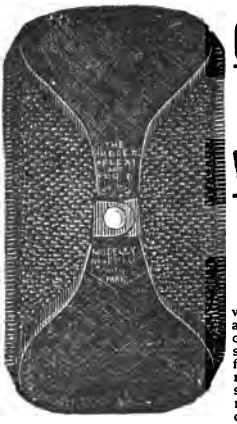
ALSO THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

Price FIFTEENPENCE.

1895. LONDON 12, ST. BRIDE ST., E.C. Nos. 310 to 313

VINOLIA SOAP FOR SENSITIVE SKINS. Price 4d., 6d., 8d., 10d., and 2/6.

...AVE'S FOOD FOR INFANTS



BAILEY'S PATENT RUBBER

COMPLEXION BRUSH AND WASHING GLOVE.

Price 3s. 6d. each.

This article is used with soap and water in the daily ablutions, just as an ordinary washing glove. It causes a gentle friction, and is consequently unequalled for keeping a firm, clear complexion. Its use renders the skin delightfully fresh, soft, and smooth. It is especially recommended for Bathing the delicate skin of infants and children.

CLEAN HANDS



For Every One, no matter what the occupation.

Used with soap and water, our Patent Rubber Brush will thoroughly cleanse and whiten the hands, removing all kinds of stains, such as ink, tar, paint, etc., and yet will not injure in the least the most delicate skin. Every performer upon a musical instrument should use it, as in addition to its cleansing properties it is invaluable for strengthening and rendering flexible the muscles of the hand, preventing undue moisture, etc.

Price 1s. Larger Size, Price 2s.

We are also the makers of BAILEY'S CELEBRATED **Rubber Bath and Flesh Brushes**, price **5s.** each.

Sold by all Chemists and Stores.

Manufacturers: **DAVID MOSELEY & SONS,**

14, ALDERMANBURY AVENUE, LONDON;

Ardwick, Manchester; and 57, Miller Street, Glasgow.

IZOD'S

LONG WAISTED. A GREAT SUCCESS.

THE LONG WAISTED.



200 Dozen or 2,400 Pairs of this Celebrated Make alone delivered this season in London per day. The great question of the day with all Ladies is the Fashion in Corsets, which grows year by year, until our special Artists have produced corsets for every type of figure.

IZOD'S CORSETS are cut on scientific principles with a precision of accuracy formerly unknown.

IZOD'S draw Ladies' attention to their Long Waisted Corsets, which have been designed by their British and Foreign Artistes, which are the best the world produces.

The Ladies' Tailors always recommend these celebrated goods for the elegence with which they set off a tailor-made dress, and create a long waist & graceful figure. They are made in a variety of qualities, and are beautiful and inexpensive. Every pair stamped on busk **Izod's Long Waisted** and also on lid of the box.

To be had of all drapers and Ladies' Outfitters in Europe, India, Canada, United States, Australia, the whole of the British Colonies, and throughout the world.

Write for our Sheet of Drawings.

E. IZOD & SON, 30, MILK ST., LONDON, E.C.

Manufactory: LANDPORT, HANTS.

IMPORTANT TO LADIES,

Especially to those who require an ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN and speedy remedy for all Irregularities and Obstructions, a Remedy which in thousands of cases has never failed to afford COMPLETE RELIEF, generally in a few hours. As Mrs. W. writes:—

"By adopting your treatment my anxiety and misery were over WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, although for over three months I had been daily taking pills and other things in vain. HALF THE QUANTITY YOU SENT ME PROVED EFFECTIVE."

Full particulars will be forwarded any lady on receipt of addressed envelope. The medicine is not expensive, as one bottle at 4s. 6d. is generally amply sufficient.

A SWORN GUARANTEE accompanies all testimonials and medicine. Write at once privately to

MRS. A. GREY,

145, STOCKWELL ROAD, LONDON, S.W.

HOLLOWAY'S PILLS

Cure Headache, Indigestion, LOSS OF APPETITE, FLATULENCY, Palpitation, Dizziness, &c. THEY PURIFY THE BLOOD, Impart Tone to the System, and Cheerfulness to the Spirits.

SOLD BY ALL MEDICINE VENDORS.

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BOILING WATER OR MILK.

Don't Cough—just use

They at once check the cough and remove the cause—without any after effect.

The Unrivalled Remedy

One gives relief they *will* cure, and they *will not* injure your health.

Keating's Lozenges

SOLD IN TINS 13½ EACH

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 310.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEARLY ten days had passed away, and it was an afternoon in the first week of June. The weather was lovely; summer sunshine and the softest of south winds producing an effect delightful even in London; and Lady Karslake's morning room in Wilton Street—shaded from any glare and full of soft, fresh air—seemed to have the full benefit of all that was pleasantest in the atmosphere. It was a charming room. In the two rather wandering years that she had spent since her husband's death, Lady Karslake had created several similarly dainty apartments, details of tastefully appointed houses. She had a peculiar faculty of impressing something of her own personality upon her surroundings; and, though she had taken the house in Wilton Street for a year only, saying that by the end of that time she would probably have tired of London, it had all the characteristics of a home.

On this particular afternoon she was straying about the room with absent, uncertain movements; quick fluctuations of expression were passing across her face, evidently the outcome of some kind of irresolution; and when she suddenly went across the room to the writing-table, there was a laugh in her eyes which invested the decision to which she had evidently come with the character of a humorous impulse. She wrote a brief note, and directed it to North Branston. Then she rang the bell.

"Send this by hand at once," she said to the servant who answered it. "If Dr. Branston is at home the messenger is to wait for an answer." She paused a moment and glanced out of the window, adding carelessly: "I want a hansom. Mind it's a nice one."

The direction in which Lady Karslake was driven was not one in which her social duties usually took her. Before very long the districts with which she was familiar were left behind, and the cab, going rapidly northward, passed into regions more or less sordid and even squalid, in which even the loveliness of the summer day seemed to lose its charm; and in which Lady Karslake's daintily dressed figure attracted sundry glances of surprise or dull admiration. At length, in a dreary little street on the very outskirts of Camden Town, the cab stopped and Lady Karslake got out. She glanced about her rather dubiously.

"You had better wait," she said to the cabman.

She lifted the little knocker and knocked with an imperious, if unaccustomed hand; a pause ensued, and she was going to knock again when the door was opened with a jar and a rattle, and a young woman stood on the threshold. She was a girl with the sallow complexion of the lower middle-class Londoner, and her white face looked tired and worried. She was very untidy. The brown dress which she wore had once been pretty and even fashionable, though poor enough in material; but it was spotted now and torn; and her fair hair, which was not unlike in hue to the gleaming coils under Lady Karslake's little black bonnet, stood in great need of brushing. She was the wife of the consumptive clerk, whose story North had told to Lady Karslake and Miss Kenderdine at Mrs. Slade-Fenton's dinner-party.

She started when her eyes fell upon her visitor and coloured crimson.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," she said in a sharp, common voice. "I never thought of seeing you again so soon, Lady Karslake —I'm sure it's very good of you. Mrs. Green"—Mrs. Green was the landlady— "has just stepped out, and I said I'd go to the door if any one should come. I'm sure I never thought—won't you walk upstairs, Lady Karslake? I'm afraid it's rather in confusion. I hope you won't mind."

She led the way to the foot of the stairs as she spoke, awkwardly enough; and as she followed Lady Karslake up she gave sundry surreptitious pats and twists to her disordered hair, and tried hastily to conceal, with the assistance of a pin, the rent in her skirt. The colour had faded from her cheeks, but her eyes were bright with mortification and annoyance. About her speech, voluble as it had been, there had lurked a constraint, almost an antagonism, which might have been responsible for something a little aggressive about her manner.

"I thought I should like to come and see that you were not working too hard," said Lady Karslake, as she mounted the shabby narrow staircase. "It is good for you to have a little of your time wasted, you know!"

Lady Karslake spoke very pleasantly; graciously, kindly, and without the faintest suggestion of patronage. But charming as her tone was, it apparently lacked that something necessary to bring into touch the refined, self-possessed woman and the common, discomposed girl. The annoyance did not die out of the face of the latter.

"I'm sure it's very good of you," she repeated, "and I'm much obliged for the work you've sent me."

She stretched out her arm in front of Lady Karslake and threw open a door, revealing a stuffy little room which looked as though its owner had lacked time or inclination to tidy it for several days. As the door opened there was a cry of "Mammy!" and a tiny boy of about three years old came tottering delightedly across the room. He stopped short as he became aware of the strange presence which accompanied his mother, and then, advancing slowly and with shy sobriety, stood clinging for protection to the shabby brown skirt, and gazing, wide-eyed, at Lady Karslake. He was a pretty little fellow, with large serious eyes and delicate features, but the little sailor suit was worn and untidy, and the sweet baby face was not particularly clean.

Lady Karslake looked down at him with dubious, half-laughing eyes and a sweet smile.

"Well, little Reginald," she said; "will you say 'How do you do?' to-day?"

She bent down, looking very lovely with that half-careless, half-coaxing smile upon her face; the untidy young mother awaiting results, as it were, her self-assertion subsiding for the first time before the half-anxious pride with which she watched the child. Apparently the delicate smiling face inspired little Reginald with confidence. A responsive smile dawned slowly on his features. He loosed his hold upon the brown dress, and stretched out his hand towards Lady Karslake. Unfortunately his general appearance had not prepared his wooer for the condition of his hand, and as an inconceivably grimy and sticky little palm approached her delicate grey glove she shrank back instinctively and involuntarily. Before she could control the impulse his mother had caught the child up in her arms, and was kissing him angrily, almost violently.

"You're a dirty boy, Regie," the girl said, and the sharp, angry feeling in her voice was not intended for the child to whom it was addressed. "You're not fit to touch Lady Karslake. You'd better run away and play."

She kept him hugged tightly in her arms, however, in spite of the suggestion, and looked across him, first at her visitor, and then round the room.

"I'm all in confusion here, as I said," she said airily. "I'm not such a quick worker as I used to be, having been out of the way of it for so long, and now I've got to sit to it again I don't seem to get time for anything else."

There was about the manner of the speech an obvious desire to impress the fact that the years of her married life had been years of dignified leisure, which taken in conjunction with her harassed face and general dishevelment was sufficiently pitiful. Lady Karslake, however, put aside the question of the room with a careless ease which brought an added shade of annoyance to her hostess's face—"It was as if," the girl declared afterwards, "she thought it quite natural that one should live in such a pig-stye!"—and went on with a quick change of tone and manner:

"When did you see your husband last?" she said. "And how is he getting on?"

The careworn lines on the girl's face deepened, and the sharp note of anxiety rang in her voice, evidently in spite of herself, as she answered.

"I saw him yesterday," she said. "We went to a great big place, didn't we, Regie, you and me, to see father?"

She cuddled the child closer to her as she spoke, as with an unconscious craving for sympathy, which stood out in marked contrast to her attitude towards Lady Karslake.

"He doesn't seem to be much better," she went on abruptly, fixing a pair of haggard eyes on Lady Karslake's face. "The nurse wouldn't say much; it doesn't seem to be their way. And I didn't see Dr. Branston."

Her voice altered as she spoke North's name into a singular mixture of awe and admiration, and Lady Karslake looked at her with careless curiosity.

"Does Dr. Branston attend your husband, then?" she said.

The girl shook her head.

"There are lots of doctors, it seems," she said. "Dr. Branston goes sometimes. But Reginald thinks more of him than of the others. I've never seen him. But Reginald says he's the kindest of them all, as well as the cleverest, though he does things in a very hard way."

She stopped suddenly in her rather gossiping communication, as though remembering the fact that her present visitor had introduced herself on her previous visit as an acquaintance of Dr. Branston's. The remembrance seemed to suggest another train of thought to her.

"I—I suppose you don't happen to know what Dr. Branston thinks about Reginald?" she said hesitatingly.

Lady Karslake made a gesture of negation, her expression very gentle and sympathetic.

"No," she said, "I really don't. But I shall see him to-night, very likely, and I'll ask him, shall I?"

"Will you?" said the girl eagerly; "and let me know?"

"And let you know, of course!" returned Lady Karslake easily, rising as she spoke. "I shall come and see you again, soon. And now I must not keep my hansom waiting any longer. Good-bye."

She held out her hand, and, as the girl took it awkwardly, she went on pleasantly and lightly:

"If I can be of any practical use to you, you will tell me, won't you?"

The girl coloured crimson and dropped her eyes.

"Thank you, Lady Karslake," she said, with a strange mixture of gratitude and reluctance in her tone. "You've paid for that work in advance, you know, and we shall do nicely till Reginald is about again."

"Good-bye, little Reginald," said Lady Karslake with a light touch on the child's fair hair; and a few minutes later she was being driven in the direction of the London that she knew.

It would have been rather difficult to tell from Lady Karslake's expression whether or no her expedition had been satisfactory to her. Those faint lines of satiety or dissatisfaction were certainly less apparent than usual in her face, but they seemed to be effaced only by a play of humour. She seemed to be thinking rather of herself than of the girl she had just left.

A flush of genuine satisfaction lighted up her face as her cab stopped at her own door just as the bell was rung by North Branston.

"How nice of you!" she exclaimed lightly as she got out. "How angry you would have been if you had been told that I was not at home!"

"I should have been surprised, certainly," said North. "Your note was rather urgent, Lady Karslake."

He was looking tired and slightly worried, but he spoke with a smile. He and Lady Karslake had met more than once since Mrs. Slade-Fenton's dinner party, and a friendly confidence seemed to have established itself between them; without being exactly a renewal of the old terms on which they had stood—a renewal never to be achieved where life has intervened—it represented a very pleasant readjustment of those terms.

"Was it urgent?" said Lady Karslake with a laugh. "Well, yes, perhaps it was! I wanted to see you at once. I hope it isn't inconvenient to you to come to me."

She added the last sentence as she preceded him down the hall, turning to him over her shoulder.

"I've been to the other end of nowhere," she continued lightly. "That's why I am rather late. I've been to see that little Mrs. Austin—your patient's wife, you know."

The glance she flashed at him as she finished had an odd touch of defiance in it. She had seated herself near the drawing-room window, and was drawing off her gloves with deft, graceful movements.

"I hope it has been a success?" said North, not ironically, but almost gently.

"A great success!" she declared gaily. "It was my second visit; I went last Saturday first, and I've been immensely interested. What a curious type it is—the London working girl! One of the products of the nineteenth century, I suppose! It was nice of your patient to marry in his own class! I imagine he is a good deal more refined than she is?"

"By-the-bye," she went on, something of gravity very charming, but an affair of the surface only, touching her manner, "what do you think of him? Has he any chance?"

North shook his head.

"No," he said tersely. "It's too late!"

Lady Karslake made a quick gesture of sympathy.

"Ah!" she said. "Isn't that terrible?"

The words were succeeded by a moment's silence.

North Branston was gazing out of window, a rather absent look upon his dark face. Lady Karslake was meditatively stroking the gloves on her knee, quick lights and shadows of expression chasing one another across her features. At last she lifted her head and looked at North, with a half-laugh in her eyes, though her voice was a little imperious.

"I haven't told you yet what I wanted to see you about!" she said. "I want you to help me, Dr. Branston. I want to do some more of this kind of thing. There's a whole phase of life that I don't know anything about, and I should like to go into it!"

North Branston turned his head and faced her.

"There are many phases of life which you don't know anything about, Lady Karslake," he said.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"No doubt," she said. "Perhaps I shall take them all in turn; who knows? The idea suggests a delightfully wide field of occupation. I think I'll take one at a time, though, and I'll begin with the one to which you can help me."

Behind the wilful determination that rang in her voice there was a faint suggestion of restlessness; and she did not pause long enough to allow him to speak, but went on lightly:

"It's a horribly conventional thing to do! I know exactly the kind of things I should say of any other woman in my place who took to philanthropy! I've said them all of myself—it's quite as amusing! I want to go to your hospital, Dr. Branston, and see the people—I might take them some flowers and things, mightn't I?—and hear about their families, and so on. There must be a great many things I could do when I came to know about them!"

"You could give a great deal of money away," answered North. His tone was very grim, but there was an odd pity in his eyes as they rested on her. "Is that what you want, Lady Karslake?"

She made an impulsive gesture of indifference.

"I don't know," she said. "It doesn't matter much about the money. I should spend it somehow. Can you manage it for me, Dr. Branston? That is the point."

"It is easily managed," he answered. "In fact, no management is needed. You can come on any visitors' day, and you can talk to any of the patients." He stopped a moment; and then he said, in a low voice, and as though he spoke almost involuntarily: "Lady Karslake, won't you believe me when I tell you again what I hinted to you the other night? It won't do!"

She looked into his cynical, tired face, and in her eyes there rose a vague dread as of some indefinite shadow not to be ignored. She tried to laugh.

"Oh, don't!" she said suddenly, in a quick, pleading tone. "It is—it is only a freak."

She rose impulsively and crossed the room mechanically to where the tea-table, forgotten by her until now, was waiting. North followed her in silence. She poured out two cups of tea in a heedless, uncertain fashion which was very unlike her.

"Sugar?" she said. Then she began to recover herself, as it seemed. She sat down by the table and began to talk in her ordinary tone and manner, changing the subject, however, completely.

"By-the-bye," she said, "I heard something about you the other day that interested me very much. Is it true that Dr. Slade-Fenton wants you for a partner?"

Phases of intimacy are curious things, subtle and not easy of definition. In that one moment of strange, strong feeling Lady Karslake and North Branston seemed to have passed out of one phase and into another. A change had come to her tone to him; an unconscious sympathetic assurance. And there was a change, too, something the same in character, in the manner of his reply. He sighed, rather wearily.

"Something of the kind is true," he said. "The partnership is open to me if I like to take it."

"It has drawbacks, I suppose?"

The quick intuitive sympathy with which

the words were uttered seemed to draw him on further.

"Many men would say that it had no drawbacks," he said. "It is a first-class position, of course—of its kind. I've had a most diplomatic interview with Slade-Fenton to-day, in which all its advantages have been delicately placed before me."

"Does he want his answer?"

North nodded.

"I can't keep it about much longer," he said heavily.

Lady Karslake sipped her tea meditatively.

"I don't much like the Slade-Fentons," she said at last, with an accent of distaste which was more pronounced than the words themselves. "There's something about them—oh, I don't know what it is, but they advertise themselves so! No, I don't like them!"

"As to that," returned North callously, "one must take people as they come. The Slade-Fentons are very average specimens, I fancy. As far as advertisement goes, everybody does it—must do it, in fact."

"True," she assented. She paused a moment, and then said: "If you don't dislike the personal connection, do you mind telling me what you see against the thing?"

"I don't like the personal connection," said North, with a slight emphasis on the verb. He had spoken slowly, and he went on more slowly still: "It's difficult to believe, but I suppose there is some aftermath of a young man's ambition at the back of my hesitation. A fashionable practice is not precisely what I coveted once."

He broke off abruptly with a bitter laugh.

"After all," he said harshly, "it's a very good thing in its way! Who gets what he coveted in this world—or who cares about it when he gets it?"

"Can you not get what you coveted?" she asked gently.

He turned his eyes upon her almost angrily.

"I've left off coveting!" he said. "That's the point!"

She drew a quick little sigh.

"It seems to me," she said, and her voice, clear and musical, broke a long silence, "that you would be wise to take the partnership. Nobody goes as far as they mean to when they are young, evidently. The only thing to be done is to take things as they are, and adapt oneself to them. After all, though I don't care about Dr. Slade-Fenton myself, his position isn't one to be despised."

"No," said North gloomily. "That's true, of course."

"And surely," she went on, "it is better to settle down, to accept the inevitable flattening that life brings, than to keep on struggling against it and denying it. What's the use of denying it? What's the use of struggling? The only thing to be done is to persuade oneself—to cheat oneself, if you like—into forgetting it."

He looked at her.

"Is that what you're doing?" he asked.

"I?" she said. She spoke hurriedly, and with a nervous laugh. "Oh, I'm not a serious person, you know. People such as I don't feel these things. But I have a kind of inkling into your state of mind, and that is what I advise. Take the partnership. By-the-bye——" she stopped, with a sudden change of manner, and began to play absently with her teaspoon; then she said in a lower voice, and without looking up at him: "Dr. Branston, I'm going to ask you a question. Are you going to marry Miss Kenderdine?"

"No," said North.

"You know that—it is said?"

"I can't help that," he replied.

Lady Karslake raised her head quickly.

"I don't like to hear a man speak like that," she said. "I am glad, though, that the report is not true. I do not like Miss Kenderdine. I suppose, then, there is no such idea in connection with this partnership?"

"Certainly not," returned North. "Slade-Fenton doesn't wish it, I fancy."

He had risen as he spoke, and he stood before her, looking down at her as though he were unaccountably loth to take leave.

"I must go," he said rather abruptly. "Lady Karslake, I hope I haven't bored you?"

"I think you know that you have not," she said. "I shall want very much to hear how you decide. You will let me know?"

"I will," he said simply; and a hand-clasp curiously eloquent of the work of that hour's conversation passed between them. He was just turning away when one of her quick changes of thought made itself apparent in her face, and she stopped him with an exclamation.

"The hospital," she said. "I want to settle about it. When will you take me there, Dr. Branston? I should like you to introduce me, please."

"I could go with you on Thursday," he said, "if that would suit you. Thursday, at two o'clock?"

"Thursday, at two o'clock, by all means," she answered. "Come to lunch first."

The appointment then made was kept in due course. Lady Karslake's first visit to the hospital seemed to give her perfect satisfaction. She moved to and fro about the wards, graceful and sympathetic, followed in all her movements by many pairs of admiring, wondering, or grateful eyes. She talked to the patients with her inalienable charm of manner, but with a touch of curiosity and eagerness underlying all her gracious ways.

To the consumptive clerk she was particularly kind, as with a sense that in his story she had found her first introduction to the new phase of life which was unfolding itself before her.

And after that first visit she went to the hospital again and again, throwing herself into the interests provided by it with a spirit and ardour that were eminently characteristic. It was her whim, apparently, to learn something of the life involved in many of the saddest cases; and finding the hospital itself, as it seemed, an insufficient field for her energies, she insisted on visiting the houses in which these lives were lived. That her impetuosity and her absolute ignorance should be imposed upon again and again was a foregone conclusion; that in such cases North Branston should be her unfailing resource, whether she summoned him to her aid, or whether he interposed against her wilful wishes, was no less inevitable.

The month of June, during which Lady Karslake pursued her new interest with unabated vehemence, thus made North a familiar visitor at the house in Wilton Street. He was its mistress's only adviser in her new pursuit, and, as such, he was in constant request. It fell to his lot to thwart her not infrequently, and he did his work with a strength such as Lady Karslake had never encountered before. But there were other times when he would guide, rather than frustrate, her plans with a grave sympathy before which her half-laughing impetuosity would become strangely hushed.

Nor was it Lady Karslake's philanthropic schemes alone that brought the two together. Lady Karslake never again alluded to the change in North Branston of which she had spoken at the Slade-Fentons'; it seemed to have slipped for her into the region of accepted facts. And yet, accept it as she might and did, there was that in their mutual relations which was only to be explained by that original consciousness on her part; an equalisation of the terms on which they stood, which had its origin in the vague pity and regret for him which hung about her. Early in June, North accepted Dr. Slade-Fenton's offer of a share in his practice, and the decision seemed to bring an added touch of cynicism to his personality. The weeks that ensued, with the business formalities necessary to the completion of the partnership which they brought in their train, seemed to bring each its own quota of bitterness to him. But the ice broken by his first discussion of the subject with Lady Karslake, never formed again. There was a tacit suggestion of a sense of fellowship about their subsequent discussions of details as they arose, and such discussions never failed to bring something of softening to the harsh gloom of North Branston's face.

A DAY AMONG THE CHILTERNS.

It is that handy Metropolitan train again, that has brought us out of the smoke of London, and set us down with the day still before us at this quiet little station in the Chiltern country. Here you have "Switzerland without the snow," as an imaginative placard on the station wall expresses it; and really the hills have quite an Alpine effect, rising all round into steep summits, while a narrow ravine just holds the little town packed in it lengthways, with not an inch to spare between your front door and the kerbstone of the street. Little! did you call it? Why, is not this Great Missenden, the chief city of the Chilterns, the mart and metropolis of all the wide, lonely country round about? But, in spite of its greatness, it is as quiet and peaceable a spot as the heart can desire, the village street widening out a little as the valley widens, while in a charming nook of meadows and stream the Abbey stands, its old timbered gateway no longer open to the wayfarer. Nor is there much to be seen if it were, except fragments here and there of the Abbey buildings enclosed within the stately old mansion that superseded them.

Here, just opposite the Abbey gate, is a little trackway that leads straight up the hill, a steep and rugged path from which you look down upon the red roofs of the houses below, and the black and white gables of the "Abbey," while the opposite heights disclose pleasant gaps and breaks in their massive contour, where gleam handsome white chalets, with gardens, lawns,

and sheltering plantations round about. The trackway itself presently wanders off in a wrong direction towards some distant point, and leaves as its representative a cart-way, that presently fines off into a devious foot-path, winding pleasantly through the heart of a charming beech-wood. Somewhere in the wood lurks a well called the Anglers' spring. Perhaps the fathers from the Abbey below, resting here after the tiring climb from the village, named it the Angel's spring, as they might have heard the Angelus softly chiming from the Abbey tower.

Coming out into the open we are on the verge of a fine rolling plateau, with great broad-backed downs stretching round about, with woods and copses showing streaks of brown and gold in the hazy autumnal glow. And here is a settlement of the ancient Beechings, small cottages about the cross-ways; cottages substantially built of brick and timber, but long since deserted by their former industrious tenants, who have mostly migrated to the great manufacturing towns.

Yet perhaps not all; for here is a little thatched house with a gay garden about it, and beyond, a kind of timber-yard strewn with the trunks of trees, all of them beeches felled in their silvery prime, some sawn up into lengths, logs you might think for the Christmas firing. But hark! from some rough wooden sheds behind the logs, comes the cheerful hum of labour; whirling shavings catch the stray sunbeams. The soft whirring sound is continuous, yet with a kind of alternating rhythm, as unlike as possible the harsh clank of machinery, and yet machinery it is, but of as simple and primitive a kind as well can be imagined.

In this one wooden shed are a man and his 'prentice hand, working away as if for dear life, and hardly raising their eyes from their task as the shadow of a stranger darkens the doorway.

"Yes, you can look on if you like," says the elder man, raising for a moment a dark, wrinkled, anxious-looking face, and then whirr goes the wooden stump he is shaping under the lathe.

But the lathe itself, what a simple, charming device! Just the segment of a fir sapling firmly planted in the earth outside, and bent down into the shed so as to form a strong spring to which is affixed a cord, the other end of which is fastened to a wooden treadle. Then you have the stump to be operated on firmly fixed on two iron pivots embedded in massive beech "chucks," with a turn of the cord round about it. Foot pressure whirls the stump round one way, the sapling does the reverse turn, and under the skilful chisel the shavings fly off, and presto! the shapeless stump is converted into a neatly-turned chair-leg, which quick as thought is thrown upon a pile of others, while its successor is hitched upon the cord, and fixed on the chucks, in less than no time. And so the continual march of chair-legs goes on.

These are all the fore-legs of chairs, you may observe, that the boss is employed upon, and he makes nothing else. The 'prentice is turning out the plain connecting spokes. In the yard is the little trap and shaggy pony that will presently carry away the completed batch to Wycombe, which is, as everybody knows, the great metropolis of cane-bottomed chairs, and employs the labours of scattered artisans working in their little sheds all over this land of beeches.

If it were not for the chairmakers the country would be a solitude, a sweet and pleasant solitude, about which you must steer your way, taking your direction from the sun's position in the heavens, and looking out keenly for signs of connecting foot-paths. For the foot-paths are the great charm of this Chiltern country. Missing the path and condemned to the dusty highway, your lot is by no means happy. But there are paths, sweet little paths, through cornfields, copses, meadows, now descending into the hollow bourne, and again rising the hill and passing through the solemn shaded wood. The paths are there in every direction, if you can only find them, and pick out the right one.

Our happy lot is to be taken in tow by the rural postman, who runs us up hill and down at a speed that causes metropolitan lungs to puff and blow like bellows out of repair. But a cheerful, intelligent companion he proves to be, with a good knowledge of the country, its foot-paths and short cuts—as he had need to be, having to cover twenty miles of ground every day on his various rounds.

Soon, under the vigorous guidance of the postman, we arrive at Hampden Rectory, a pleasant sixteenth-century gabled house in red brick, and one might expect to find the church close at hand. But no, it is a mile off over the fields, where the haymakers are getting in a second crop of hay. It is the great house that comes in sight first, the stately home of John Hampden's successors, and the little church stands under the

wing of the big house, with its homely, weather-beaten, shrunken little tower, and a few ancient clerestory windows that peer over the new flint work of the restored building with quite a pathetic glance. Yes, it is John Hampden's church, and here his bones are laid, shattered by the bullet that sped so well to its mark that day on Chalgrove Field. But no one knows exactly where he lies, and there is no contemporary monument to him in the church.

John Hampden's house is a composite structure, much added to and altered since the patriot's time, although the west front, looking out on some noble cedars and a sweep of verdant lawn, is pretty much as he left it. Hampden's descendants still occupy the place, although the direct male line is extinct, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, who now occupies the mansion, coming in through patriot John's youngest daughter, sweet Mary Hampden, who married Sir John Hobart, son of stout Sir Miles, who locked the House of Commons door against the King's messenger while a friend held down the time-serving Speaker in his chair. Further along a fine young fir-tree is called the Pasha's, having been planted by Hobart Pasha, a scion of the same stock, once High Admiral of the Turkish Fleet. The park, indeed, abounds in fine forest trees, and beautiful hanging woods adorn the slopes, while from every break of the ground you get glimpses of the noble bastions of the hills, whose highest summits are scored with ancient, prehistoric earthworks.

From Hampden one passes through a narrow glen with cornfields at the bottom and turnip fields, and by-and-by the glen opens out into a beautiful sweep of park, whose velvet lawn reaches far up the side of a wild and weird-looking hill. It is the Beacon Hill, whose far-flashing signal may have summoned the chiefs of Britain to meet in arms to resist the Roman invader.

In a hollow beneath the hill, but still far above the level of the surrounding country, stands a famous old house, in the midst of a beautiful sweep of lawn and wood. With many mullioned windows, and quaint mixtures of style, a turret here, an ivied wall, a group of fine chimneys, there is something delightfully appropriate in the appearance of the "Chequers." You can fancy the chief who held the fort on the hill above raising his wooden palace in the sheltered nook, and how, without any very violent change, one building succeeded another till a few centuries ago, when all was crystallised in that grey old stone work. And the name, too, so homely that a stranger would think that some tavern was in question, but so ancient that it has been thought that here was indeed an Exchequer of one of the old Norman Kings—for there is a Royal lodge not far off—when that ancient Court travelled about with the King, wherever he might go.

It is pretty evident that the lord of the "Chequers" held one of the main passes into the low countries of the midlands, for the old trackway pitches steeply down through a gorge that may well have been the scene of fierce prehistoric battles long ago, and so to say shoots you out into the flat, fat, fertile vale of Aylesbury before you know where you are. Then you are clear of the Chilterns country, and look back upon its great chalk ridges eight or nine hundred feet high, rising almost sheer out of the plain; all within the compass of a bare half-mile.

But we don't want to lose sight of the "Chequers" just yet, or pass from this sweet romantic region to the commonplace plain. A charming little path takes us over the ridge where we may get another view of the house. There is a tradition that the great Oliver sleeps his last sleep somewhere within the compass of these woods; and here he is known to have resorted for rest and tranquillity among faithful family friends. There are more relics of the great Protector in that old house than, perhaps, elsewhere in England. Milton, too, may have passed beneath that hospitable roof, and have found succour there in the bitter days that were to follow.

It is all a region of romance, for over there lies Belin's castle, said to have been the stronghold of Cunobelin, that British Prince whom Shakespeare celebrated as Cymbeline. A little further on we come suddenly upon an outlying spur of the great chalk range, a rude mamelon scored with the traces of ramp and ditch, but on its summit in peaceful triumph a handsome village church. There is no village near it, unless one tall old timbered house with a thatched roof makes a village of itself. But a church more nobly placed one could find nowhere.

Half England seems to be spread before you as you stand on the crumbling graves of the forefathers of the hamlet. There is no bound to the view. That shadowy streak of hills on the horizon must be the Cotswolds, that lead into Shakespeare's country; and far away in another direction

are the hazy Bedford levels where the Ouse glides slowly through Cowper's country to the great North Sea. The rich vale of Aylesbury at our feet, with its great stretches of pastures and innumerable herds of cattle, is but an incident in the great landscape. From the Beacon Hill that rises just behind us, it is said that on a clear day the great Breconshire beacons have been sighted on one hand, and on the other the crest of the Malvern Hills.

The church is Ellesborough, doubtless the very site where Ella built his fort—or perhaps he stormed it and took it from some British chief, or might have himself been stormed and slain by some valiant Arthur of the period. Though the building is new, with only fragmentary relics of its predecessor, yet the monuments and brasses are interesting. We are asked to "pray for the sowle of Thomas Hawtrey and Sybell hys wyffe," who died some three hundred and fifty years ago—quite modern people compared with Sir Ella. And there is a grand monument to one Brigetta Croke, who died a century later when "sowles" might no longer be prayed for.

Down at the foot of the hill is a pleasant village which bears the name of "Butler's Cross," the cross ways where there was a "calvary" once, no doubt, but a cross-way also of vast antiquity, for this old track that goes corkscrewing along with such sinuous directness is the Icknield way, a British trackway running to the country of the Iceni; and the other way which runs north and south is probably of equal antiquity. And there is a pleasant little inn at the foot of the hill, but that is the first we have seen since leaving Missenden; so that in crossing the Chilterns it is as well to have your "bit of grub" in your pocket.

A little sanded parlour with settles all round, and panelled walls adorned with some old-fashioned coloured prints, seems to invite a rest; but it is necessary to push on to Wendover, a pleasant walk along the Icknield way, festooned with "traveller's joy" and hedged with blackberry bushes. It is a ridgeway all along with pleasant views over the vale, while on the other hand the great downs show their wooded summits, and now begin to glow with the mystic light of evening. In the cornfields below a reaping machine is working away with ominous clatter, and vaguely waving its many arms in the air. An old man with a sickle follows humbly in the rear, correcting the little mistakes made by the big machine—not with too much good will, one would think, towards that whirling monster, as he thinks of the good old harvest days and of comrades now sleeping in the churchyard.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield.

Further on a steam-engine is at work in the same line, and snorting like the huge dragon that once was the terror of this old Icknield way.

But Wendover is now in sight, a pleasant old town on the slope of the hill, with its Metropolitan Station suggesting Baker Street. A capital centre is Wendover for visiting all the celebrated places of the Chiltern country, with splendid hills and fine country on either side, and

Tring, Wing, and Ivanhoe,

which, according to tradition, were lost to a former Hampden — terribly uncourtly fellows those old Hampdens—

For striking the Black Prince a blow!

And there is the same Prince's country seat —anyhow, its foundations—to be seen at Princes Risborough in the other direction, and all the beautiful country through which we have made this hasty tour. Breakfasting at home at no heroic hour; dining at home, and not much later than usual; and between the two epochs so many hours of vivid enjoyment. The cost per head, railway ticket three shillings and sixpence, refreshment at Butler's Cross in the sanded parlour twopence halfpenny. Surely our Metropolitan "Switzerland without the snow" is worth visiting at the price!

A CENTURY OF FEMININE FICTION.

In his well-known essay on the "Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay," Macaulay writes as follows:

"It is not only on account of the intrinsic merit of Madame D'Arblay's early works that she is entitled to honourable mention. Her appearance is an important epoch in our literary history. 'Evelina' was the first tale written by a woman, and purporting to be a picture of life and manners, that lived or deserved to live. . . .

"Indeed, most of the popular novels which preceded 'Evelina' were such as no lady would have written; and many of them were such as no lady could without confusion own that she had read. The very name of novel was held in horror among religious people. In decent families, which did not profess extraordinary sanctity,

there was a strong feeling against all such works. Sir Anthony Absolute, two or three years before 'Evelina' appeared, spoke the sense of the great body of sober fathers and husbands, when he pronounced the circulating library an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge. This feeling on the part of the grave and reflecting, increased the evil from which it had sprung. The novelist having little character to lose, and having few readers among serious people, took without scruple liberties which in our generation seem almost incredible.

"Miss Burney did for the English novel what Jeremy Collier did for the English drama; and she did it in a better way. She first showed that a tale might be written in which both the fashionable and the vulgar life of London might be exhibited with great force, and with broad comic humour, and which yet should not contain a single line inconsistent with rigid morality, or even with virgin delicacy. She took away the reproach which lay on a most useful and delightful species of composition. She vindicated the right of her sex to an equal share in a fair and noble province of letters. Several accomplished women have followed in her track. At present, the novels which we owe to English ladies form no small part of the literary glory of our country. No class of works is more honourably distinguished by fine observation, by grace, by delicate wit, by pure moral feeling. Several among the successors of Madame D'Arblay have equalled her; two, we think, have surpassed her. But the fact that she has been surpassed gives her an additional claim to our respect and gratitude; for, in truth, we owe to her not only 'Evelina,' 'Cecilia,' and 'Camilla,' but also 'Mansfield Park' and 'The Absentee.'"

Now these are strong words; and the position here assigned to women in the wide province of literature that we call fiction, is a singularly high and noble one. Macaulay's stately eulogium is as a crown upon the brows of the first great woman novelist, and — through her — upon the brows of her successors, who have so worthily maintained the reputation she established for "fine observation," "grace," "delicate wit," and "pure moral feeling." Macaulay wrote in 1843, more than sixty years after the publication of "Evelina," and when, as he himself points out, "several accomplished women" had already followed in Miss Burney's track. Now, half a century later, it can scarcely fail to be both interesting and instructive to see how it has fared with the reputation Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth maintained so nobly; and how far our women novelists of the present day deserve to wear the crown they inherited from Fanny Burney by right divine of genius wedded to "virgin delicacy."

In one of the leading journals amongst those that are especially devoted to the consideration of women's work and all matters of interest to women, we find the following scathing criticism of modern "feminine fiction":

"If the New Woman elects to be judged by the fiction she writes, reads, and applauds, nay—may we not justly add —inspires, then she must, in our opinion, accept the position of the bitterest foe to the cherished modesty of our sex that the century has known. The stories woven by feminine imaginations within the last decade have served but to reveal a passion for thinly-veiled pruriency in the minds of those who conceived them. It is true that these writers lay claim to lofty motives, high purpose, and purity of intention. But these are pleas which do not avail them before the tribunal of healthy womanly opinion. Their literary concoctions are all the more disquieting because of the intellectual refinement which serves but to hide the real extent of their danger to the happiness of society. There is far less to be fearful about in the vulgar suggestiveness of the brochures which are hawked in the gutters than there is to be alarmed at in the cleverly-written, plausibly-argued, and ingeniously-advertised novels which go to swell the torrent of feminine fiction that threatens to sweep such commonplace virtues as womanliness, wifeliness, and motherliness out of existence. Thoughtful folks, who rely upon the soundness of the hearts of the British matron and maid, must regret the existence, but they need not hopelessly dread the effect, of the erotic nonsense of catchpenny sheets nearly so much as the publication, in the attractive form of the novel, of those insidious theories on the subject of marriage and maternity which seem—for the nonce at all events—to be fascinating the flower of English womanhood. We take it to be a standing degradation of the noblest traditions of our sex—and we hold mere prudery to be closely akin to hypocrisy —that one of the most noteworthy facts of the closing years of this century will be that the most accomplished of our sisters have devoted their talents to denouncing the obligations of the marriage tie and belittling the sacredness of motherhood."

This is indeed in startling contrast to Macaulay's glowing picture of the influence of women on fiction, and yet we cannot think the condemnation one whit too strong. It needs but a very superficial knowledge of too many of the most widely read novels of the day to see how just this judgement is, and how real the danger that threatens society from the flood of unwholesome and pestilential novels, poured forth—whether with or without "a purpose"—from the distorted minds of some of the most gifted women of our time; women who appear to have cultivated the intellect at the expense of all womanly feeling and instinctive delicacy, and to have cast aside all reticence in the mad desire to make others eat as freely as themselves of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.

And it is not in the pages of "The Lady" alone, and publications of that class, that we find the works of too many of our modern lady novelists thus severely condemned; for in the Editorial Notes of that eminently practical and common-sense little magazine, "The Lady's Companion," we read as follows:

"Wishing to judge this question impartially, I have recently been wading through, one after the other, what has been not ineptly termed 'the silly sexual novel,' and which appear to deal entirely with the relations of men and women in their lowest sense, and in portraying the woman of the future as she exists in the minds of these fervid pioneers. . . . Yes, I have gone all up and down the deadly dull and grossly forcible gamut. I have journeyed through the life pilgrimage, or part of it, of 'The Heavenly Twins'—or, rather, the female twin—the men in this particular story being of very small account. In fact, with the exception of Dr. Galbraith, who becomes the second husband of the very 'knowledgeable' young lady known as Evadne Frayling, an eccentric lord whose whole life is devoted to a woman already wedded, and an equally eccentric American, all the men are either profligates or fools. I must except the tenor; but this beautiful interlude is a thing apart from the general tone of the work itself. I have nauseated myself with 'Keynotes,' and been revolted by the gross realism of some portions of 'A Superfluous Woman.' 'A Yellow Aster' is my last achievement; it 'has gone into its twenty-second thousand, I see—I wonder why. It is an essentially dull book, I thought—full of curious phrases and strained sentences. . . . Do not think I cannot perceive the germ of truth that lies at the bottom of this very dry and dreary literary well, but I venture to believe that such fathers and mothers as Mr. and Mrs. Waring are the very, very great exception in this world of ours, and their most eccentric, ungirlish, and unwomanly daughter an almost impossible creation."

Truly, judging from these criticisms of her work—the truth of which can scarcely be denied by those who have read it with ordinary attention and discrimination—the fin-de-siècle female novelist can scarcely be congratulated on her "delicate wit" or "pure moral feeling." Her warmest admirer would hardly venture to maintain that her delineations of "life" do "not contain a single line inconsistent with rigid morality, or even with virgin delicacy." On the contrary, she revels in "risky" subjects, and loves to deal with them in the most risky fashion. Even when—unlike Madame Sarah Grand—she does not appear to write with "a purpose," she seems too often to have a natural affinity for painful and unpleasant topics that, in our humble opinion, are far better left alone. What possible good purpose can such revolting stories as "A Penitent Soul," or "Vendetta; the Story of One Forgotten," serve? We take these instances from amongst many almost at random, and it seems to us that they are both—though with a difference, of course—about as unwholesome reading as even our lady novelist often serves up to us. It must, we venture to think, be extremely demoralising to write of such matters with such infinite variety of detail, and it is certainly neither good nor edifying to read of them. It is not for the proverbial young person of fifteen alone that so many of the novels nowadays are unfit to read; they are—and should be considered—unfit to read for any high-minded woman, of whatever age, who respects herself, and has not yet learnt to despise her fellow-creatures.

Thus—so far as these fin-de-siècle novelists are concerned—women in the fifty years since Macaulay wrote have assuredly not maintained the high reputation which Madame D'Arblay won for her sex; and this despite many noble gifts of imagination and of eloquence. Their crown has fallen, their glory is dimmed, for they have wilfully cast away a noble opportunity; they have not done their part to maintain the high moral standard for which the earlier women novelists were so "honourably distin-

guished," but have rather abused their natural gifts till the "circulating library" is in danger of becoming once more "an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge."

Fortunately for us, however, the literary reputation of our countrywomen does not depend alone upon the productions of such writers as these. During the fifty years that have elapsed since Macaulay wrote, many great and honoured feminine novelists have passed from us, whose names are now "familiar in our mouths as household words." George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Craik, and many others who nobly maintained the lofty traditions of past excellence, rest from their labours; but we have yet good and highly-gifted women amongst us who have been true to the best instincts of their womanhood, and of whom—as of their work—we may justly be proud.

While such writers as Mrs. Oliphant, Edna Lyall, the Honourable Emily Lawless, L. B. Walford, Dorothea Gerard, and a host of others whom we have not space to mention, continue to supply our circulating libraries with novels "honourably distinguished by fine observation, by grace, by delicate wit, by pure moral feeling," we need not despair of the future of our fiction—our feminine fiction—even though too many of the most accomplished women of the day seem bent on employing all their powers to bring it into disrepute. It is, in all probability, merely a temporary craze on their part; a wild and feverish dream from which, anon, they "shall wake and be wise."

In the meantime, let us say with our last great Laureate:

> My faith is large in time,
> And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MODERN ENGINEERING.

The restless spirit of human progress, which is ever at war with the powers of Nature, is never satisfied; the conquests of one generation are totally eclipsed by those of the next, and the watchword of engineering science, which bears the brunt of the battle, is ever "Onward." No obstacle is too great to be surmounted. The greatest tasks need but an increase, in the proper ratio, of the time, men, and money required for the completion of the smallest, with the necessary modification of methods.

The engineer is the most versatile of modern professional men, as he must be the most thoroughly equipped, but so numerous and extensive are the fields in which engineering is occupied that the profession is now broken up into a host of separate departments, each requiring a special training. The whole field is too vast to be within the power of any individual to grasp. Without specifying them in too great detail, there are branches of engineering which deal with machine construction and metal-working; with the construction of roads, railways, canals, harbours, and docks; the building of bridges of wood, stone, or metal; embankments and dams of masonry or earthwork; military fortifications and trenches; the carrying out of systems of water supply, including storage, transit, filtering, and final house-to-house distribution; drainage, irrigation, and sewerage; and the construction and working of electrical instruments and machinery. For all those branches of engineering practice there is requisite in each case the corresponding equipment of theoretical and practical knowledge—technical knowledge built, to be thoroughly efficient, on a sure foundation of mechanics and mathematics, without which mere rule-of-thumb would prevail, hampering the exercise of freedom in unforeseen emergencies or untried situations.

Only since iron came to be freely worked and used can it be said that engineering has been able to make real progress. With this most precious of metals, either as tools or as material, have the miracles of engineering been wrought. The ancients did marvels with the means at their disposal. Many of their works remain as apparently imperishable monuments of their skill and patience, preserved by favourable circumstances as examples well qualified to excite the admiration of experts no less than of the ordinary man. But those master-builders of antiquity for the most part wasted their energies in erecting huge edifices, pyramids, temples, palaces—mere useless excrescences, which ministered to the pride of tyrannical monarchs and domineering priestcraft—while their modern successors exercise their talents in the construction of works of utility which benefit the people at large. Not that such works as those in which the ancients delighted are beyond the powers of modern builders to rival, should they choose to turn their minds to the work, and were the means provided. The building of the Great Pyramid at Ghizeh occupied the unremitting labour of a hundred thousand men for twenty years. With sufficient

pecuniary inducement, more than one contractor could be got in this country who would undertake to build a duplicate with a couple of thousand men in a third of the time, or less.

It would be impossible, within moderate compass, to enumerate a tenth part of the great engineering works of modern times, and mention can here be made of only a few of the most prominent. Nearly every civilised country can show some remarkable works in one or more of the great departments of engineering, which present special features of interest, either in their extent, in their novelty, or in the natural difficulties overcome during their construction.

In no branch has engineering done more than in improving the means of internal communication. While in former days travelling was difficult, and comparatively few braved the discomforts and even the dangers of a journey of a hundred miles or more, nowadays only the few stay at home untempted by the abundant facilities provided for cheap and easy transit. It cannot be denied that the influence of railways, which provide the chief means of internal communication, has been of simply incalculable benefit in stimulating industry and in creating new branches of trade. The most remarkable feature of this powerful factor in material progress is its rapid growth. Looked on at first with much prejudice, and opposed with all the might of vested interests, the railway system made little progress from the construction of the first railway—the Stockton and Darlington—in 1825, until after 1840, when the Railway Mania caused an overhasty and ill-considered expansion. Since that unfortunate time progress has been steady and sure, though in the United States it has been very rapid—perhaps too rapid, rather hastening ahead of the developement of the country than more prudently keeping abreast of it.

According to a statistical table presented at the Railway Congress recently held in St. Petersburg, the total length of railway lines open in the different quarters of the world at the beginning of this year was three hundred and eighty-five thousand eight hundred and three miles. Of this vast total, which is sufficient to lay a girdle of railway track round the earth at the equator sixteen times, the United States possess one hundred and sixty-seven thousand seven hundred and fifty-five miles, or considerably more than the lines of all the other continents together. For working the world's railways there are in use one hundred and seventeen thousand two hundred locomotives, while the total capital embarked in railway enterprise is estimated at six thousand seven hundred and fifty million pounds. Of this tremendous sum, the proportion which is unremunerative, or has been created by juggling financial operations, must be very large; but still the amount which represents real working capital furnishing some return at least to investors, is probably much larger than the capital employed in any other branch of industry whatever.

The most remarkable triumphs of railway engineering have been carried out in mountainous districts such as the Rocky Mountains, where, as in the case of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the mere preliminary surveying for the purpose of selecting the route was a work of great difficulty and even of no small danger. The spanning of that gigantic and apparently inaccessible natural barrier by the necessarily substantial pathway of a railroad track, a work which involved an immense amount of rock-cutting—in some places along the very face of tremendous perpendicular cliffs, half-way up, the path had to be blasted out—and the crossing by airy, fragile-looking trestle bridges of vast gorges, and so on, was carried out so energetically that the line was complete four or five years before the contract time had expired.

The trans-Andine Railway, which is rapidly approaching completion, is the first railway attempted to be built across South America. The actual crossing of the Andes by the selected route involves the ascent and descent of ten thousand feet on less than one hundred and fifty miles of railway line, necessitating gradients so steep that a considerable portion will be fitted up with rack-rails on which locomotives with toothed wheels will run, and this even although two thousand feet are saved at the extreme height by a tunnel three miles long.

The highest railway in Europe is the Brienzer Rothhorn Alpine Railway, which was opened in 1891, after having been under construction for very little more than a year, although in its course there are no fewer than ten tunnels, besides a few bridges and dams. This line carries the passenger to a height above sea-level of nearly eight thousand feet in an hour and a half by a line worked on the rack and pinion system, the steepest gradient of which is one in four.

There are computed to be about a thousand railway tunnels on the lines of all the

world. Many of these are wonderful engineering works considered by themselves. Most notable are the three which are bored through the Alps—the Arlberg, Mont Cenis, and St. Gothard tunnels—and there is even a project on foot for driving another through the Simplon, which, as planned, will be about twelve miles in length, or three miles longer than the existing St. Gothard Tunnel. Near Galeria, in Peru, the highest inhabited village in the world, which is at an altitude of only a hundred feet below that of the summit of Mont Blanc, there is being constructed a tunnel over a thousand yards long, considerably above the line of perpetual snow. The difficulties of tunnel-boring are in this case much enhanced by the great elevation, the rarity of the atmosphere making it almost impossible for the workmen to carry on their labours.

Railways are a thing of to-day, viewed in comparison with the venerable antiquity of canals as a means of internal communication. The Egyptians used them extensively, and two still exist in Lincolnshire that were built by the Romans. China has many very old canals; one of which, the Imperial Canal, is over a thousand miles long. The greatest undertaking of the kind in Europe, the Canal of Languedoc, or the Canal du Midi, was completed in 1681. In the flush of railway construction canals were comparatively neglected, but of late a marked revival of interest in them has taken place, mainly owing to the prohibitive railway charges on some classes of goods. Where there is no special call for quick transit, canals offer a much cheaper mode of conveyance. Competition is, however, very keen between the rival ways, and some time must elapse before it can be ascertained whether such a great and costly undertaking as the recently completed Manchester Ship Canal will, in the end, pay as a commercial speculation.

France has three thousand miles of canals and two thousand miles of canalised rivers, and it is in contemplation to render all the principal waterways in that country available for vessels of three hundred tons with a draught of six feet; and also to make the Seine available for large ships as far as Paris. French engineering has, indeed, notably distinguished itself in canal work, the Suez Canal, notwithstanding its great cost, having proved one of the most successful works of recent times, even from a financial point of view. Still, against this success of French enterprise there has to be set the disastrous Panama Canal. In the so far abortive attempts to carry this great undertaking through, enormous sums of money have been absolutely thrown away without much visible return in the way of progress. Quite recently, however, the matter has again been taken up, and it may be hoped that such dogged perseverance will in the end succeed, which it will assuredly stand a better chance of doing if there is less financial juggling and more digging.

The canal which is in progress of construction to unite the North Sea with the Baltic, and thus to afford a route whereby the dangers attending the navigation of the Kattegat and Skager Rack may be avoided, is said to excel, from an engineering standpoint, the Suez, Corinth, and Manchester Canals, and to be entitled, from its commercial and strategic importance, to be styled the "Suez Canal" of Europe. Reaching from Holtenau on the Kieler Fiord, across Holstein to Brunsbuttel on the Elbe, this sixty-mile canal will save two hundred and fifty miles on a journey to the Thames, and two hundred miles on a journey to Hull.

Such enormous and costly structures as the Forth Bridge and the recently completed Tower Bridge across the Thames, are remarkable examples both of the triumphs of modern engineering and of the great amount of traffic for which channels have to be provided; the Forth Bridge having been erected mainly to save a few miles of a railway journey, and the Tower Bridge mainly to relieve the congested state of the traffic across London Bridge. The Forth Bridge is unquestionably the greatest work of the kind in the world. Without repeating figures which are so well known as to be commonplace, it may be stated, by way of illustrating its magnitude, that the great piers are nearly as high as St. Paul's Cathedral, while the bridge proper, without the approaches, is equivalent to two Eiffel Towers set end to end. There are many great bridges, but they all sink into insignificance beside this monster, which is daring both in inception and in execution.

The erection of the Eiffel Tower, looked upon merely as a bold experiment in engineering construction, has demonstrated the enormous capabilities of iron and steel as building material. Useful it certainly is not, though some use has been made of it for physical experiments and meteorological observations; it has been denounced by

artistic critics as an architectural monstrosity, while its mere hugeness dwarfs the most splendid buildings in its vicinity; yet because it is an engineering triumph of French genius, English engineers had to take in hand the task of outdoing it. Hence the Wembley Park Tower, which is being slowly raised in the neighbourhood of London, is planned to outstrip it in height by a couple of hundred feet. It remains to be seen, when it is finished, if ever it will be, whether this huge pillar will attract the giddy crowd in sufficient numbers to make the speculation pay, or whether it will justify its nickname of "Watkin's folly."

What can be done in an emergency by modern mechanical appliances is wonderfully exemplified by the occasional successful removal of buildings of considerable size bodily from their old positions to new ones at some distance. This rather remarkable operation is sometimes regarded as a purely American idea. It is certainly much more generally practised in the United States than on this side, the operation being favoured by the method of construction of the houses or warehouses moved, but the notion is really an importation from the old country. Even in the sixteenth century a building in Throgmorton Street, in the City of London, was made to change its base, and in 1841 a stone lighthouse was moved some distance at Sunderland. Recently a railway station in Cheshire, which weighed in all about four hundred tons, was moved six feet back into a more suitable position. An unusually large undertaking of the kind, even in the United States, was the moving of a huge iron signal tower, one hundred and twenty-seven feet high, and weighing three hundred and sixty thousand pounds, to the distance of fifty-four feet; a feat which was successfully accomplished in an hour and twenty minutes. The advance of mechanical engineering is shown by the following parallel statements. In 1586 Fontana raised an obelisk in Rome with forty capstans, worked by nine hundred and sixty men and seventy-five horses. In 1878 Mr. Dixon raised Cleopatra's Needle with four patent hydraulic lifting-jacks, worked by four men.

The great works of sewage removal and water supply necessitated by the aggregation of multitudes in great cities task the powers of sanitary engineering science and practice to the utmost. In London there are some eighty miles of main sewers, and four thousand miles of smaller drains, from which two hundred million gallons of sewage are discharged every twenty-four hours. The purification of this enormous quantity, so that the Thames shall no more receive it in its first state of impurity as it at present does, is engaging earnest attention at present. Both in London and other large cities, where the problem is the same, though the scale of necessary operations is smaller, works for sewage purification are being actively constructed to deal chemically with at least a large portion of the sewage. The problems of water supply are of even more importance, and no amount of money appears to be thought too much to pay in order to provide the dwellers in cities with an ample supply of the indispensable fluid. Prominent among the great schemes of this kind are the Liverpool—Vyrnwy—Waterworks, which, when completed, will bring water sufficient for the needs of a possible total of two million three hundred thousand people, from a distance of seventy-seven miles—the aqueduct being the longest in the world. Manchester also has, just about completion, a similar undertaking, intended to convey the waters of Lake Thirlmere by an aqueduct nearly a hundred miles in length, of which a considerable portion, however, consists merely of an open trench lined with cement.

The engineering problems offered by the needs of cities are curiously exemplified by noting the underground works to be found in the heart of London. Below the busy thoroughfare of Queen Victoria Street there is the District Underground Railway, below which runs the low-level main sewer. Underneath this again the new City and Waterloo Electric Railway will run, which will reach its terminus at a depth of about sixty-three feet below the streets, and communicating with another line—the Central London—which will lie at a depth of eighty feet. In fact, London is so honeycombed below ground by house-cellars, drain and water-pipes, mains for gas, water, and electric light supply, sewers, and railways, that pessimistic observers have hazarded the unpleasant prophecy that some day the enormous weight of the superincumbent buildings will break through into the hollows, and the whole collection of fabrics totally collapse.

A genuine engineering curiosity is the colossal flume which conveys water from the mountains to the reservoir of San Diego, California. It is thirty-five miles long, and built almost entirely of redwood.

In its course this monster crosses three hundred and fifteen streams and canyons on trestles, the largest of which is one thousand seven hundred feet in length and eighty-five feet high. In its course it also passes through eight tunnels, one of which is over two thousand feet in length.

Almost everywhere it has been found possible by judicious drainage works to increase considerably the area of land available for agricultural purposes. One of the most extensive areas where such operations are going on are the Pinsk marshes on the Russian borders of Galicia, where a fever-breeding, marshy region, larger in area than Scotland, has been under treatment since 1870. By 1890 one hundred and eighty-five square miles had been drained on the banks of the Pripet, and more than seven millions of acres of meadow land reclaimed, with immense benefit to the health of the country. The Pinsk marshes have almost disappeared, prosperous farms now occupying the sites once covered by them.

Holland is practically preserved intact by the continued maintenance of the great dykes which keep out the sea, and the industrious Dutch have in contemplation the addition of half a million acres to their territory by draining the Zuyder Zee, and bringing into view once more the villages which have been buried beneath its waters for six centuries. The undertaking will necessitate the building of an eighteen-mile dyke from North Holland to Friesland, but this construction will save the ceaseless watching and strengthening of one hundred and sixty-five miles of the Zuyder Zee coast. The time which it is contemplated to devote to this great work will be thirty-two years, in order to prevent too great an area of reclaimed land being thrown on the market in any one year, and the cost is estimated to amount to sixteen million pounds.

Perhaps the most stupendous engineering feat ever undertaken is that by which it is intended to utilise a portion of the vast natural power presently running to waste in Niagara Falls. The total power of the Falls is calculated to be sixteen million horse-power—more than enough to run all the engines of every sort on the American continent. The works in progress are designed to utilise a mere fraction of this enormous supply—something like a quarter of a million horse-power—to be converted into electricity, and distributed to works erected in the immediate vicinity, and transmitted ultimately to considerable distances. The work consists essentially in bringing a part of the water from above the Falls through a huge tunnel, and causing it to fall into a great wheel-pit, where it will operate large turbines, which in turn will drive immense five thousand horse-power dynamos above ground, the waste water being then carried down by another tunnel to issue into the river below the Falls. Rapid progress has been made, and there is every prospect that the scheme will be brought to a successful termination.

The briefest sketch of the triumphs of modern engineering would be incomplete without some reference to one or two of the remarkable projects which have been mooted for the construction of great works. Some of these are feasible enough, while others are quite impracticable, either from physical difficulties, or from the enormous expense they would entail.

There are two great railway schemes which are attracting the attention of engineers. One is a scheme for uniting the railway systems of North and South America, by constructing linking lines wherever necessary, so that it may ultimately be possible to take a continuous railway ride from the most northern railway station in Canada to the city of Buenos Ayres. The greatest difficulty is in the Isthmus and the country immediately south of it, where tropical swamps interpose their deadly and destructive obstacles. The progress of a preliminary survey for a portion of the proposed road was at the rate of half a mile a day, though four axemen in front were continually at work clearing the way. If ever completed, this Pan-American Railway would be but a composite affair, while the other great scheme, that of Russia's trans-Siberian Railway, would be but a single property. This is beyond comparison the most extensive enterprise of the kind. Financially straitened as Russia no doubt generally is, she can always somehow find funds for such purposes as she has set her mind on, and much work has already been done on several sections of this great line, the length of which will be four thousand seven hundred and eighty-five miles, from the European borders of the empire right on to Vladivostock on the Pacific coast of Siberia—a length of line twice as great as that of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Schemes for improving the means of transit across the English Channel have bulked largely in the public eye for many years. The most prominent of these, the

Channel Tunnel project, work on which was actually begun, at present lies dormant owing to considerations of international polity. The scheme is undoubtedly practicable, but as much can hardly be said for the scheme which proposes to throw a bridge across the Channel, or that which proposes to construct a vast iron tube, and sink it to the bottom—some have even suggested to make such a tube to float a few fathoms below the surface, anchored by suitable means, and buoyed up by its own floating powers. A similar proposal for a tubular iron tunnel supported near the surface has been made for crossing the Sound between Elsinore and Helsingborg—a much smaller distance than that required to cross the English Channel. A tunnel has also been proposed to unite Scotland and Ireland across the twenty-one miles or so of sea which intervenes between Port Patrick and Donaghadee.

A remarkable idea is that of damming the Irish Sea by a great "barrage" between the Mull of Cantire and Antrim, where the depth is only some three or four hundred feet, in order to get unlimited water-power from the tides for utilisation by electricity. Such a dam, it is estimated, might be built in three or four years.

A chimerical proposal was made some years ago for aiding navigation across the Atlantic by placing lightships, at intervals of two hundred miles, from the Irish coast in a straight line to the Banks of Newfoundland, properly anchored so as to rise to the largest waves without shifting their position, and connected with each other and the shores by electric cables.

DAVID CROWHURST'S ORDEAL.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. INGLESIDE.

The warm August day was fading to a close in still gorgeousness, while over hills and woods brooded the gladness of the country summer-time. Over the Blue Mountains the clouds towered, shifting their resemblance with the instability of mist. The sun, setting behind the western hills, streamed in long, lingering rays upon the bosom of the Georgian Bay. The sky was pale blue, faint with summer heat and dryness. The billowy greenness near at hand spread into the silver-grey of distance; the level lines of landscape and the great vault of sky dropped together into a transparent haze, a vast breadth of space and silence.

Looking up from the book which he had been reading, Reuben Raeburn's eyes rested reflectively upon the distant mountain splendours. His wife, with her three months old baby in her arms, was rocking herself gently to and fro, accompanying the movement of her chair with a soft, low-toned lullaby. Happening to glance around, she suddenly caught a glimpse of the absorbed expression on her husband's face. The tender strain died away on her lips, she remained perfectly still regarding him anxiously. In an instant, the shadow of a vague, jealous fear acquired fresh vitality. Of what was Reuben continually thinking? He seemed to exist in a sphere into which she had no chance of following.

He was a reticent, thoughtful man, who read and reflected a good deal, but rarely shared the result of his cogitations. Six years of matrimony had dispelled many illusions, many high-flown hopes and expectations. As mistress of Ingleside Farm, Mrs. Raeburn was a busy woman, with slight leisure for morbid introspection, but she was naturally imaginative and impressionable, and just at this moment, an instinctive perception of how very small was the hold she had upon her husband's confidence, smote her with the sharpness of a new sensation. It was partially to smother this poignant pang that, with rising colour and quickened breath, she started to her feet, calling:

"Reuben, Reuben."

There was a sort of vehement appeal in her own voice which struck Mrs. Raeburn with a sense of shame and compunction; she sank back into her chair still confused, and indignant with herself for yielding to a panic for which no reasonable foundation existed.

"It is being so much alone, and going out of doors so little. I am getting fanciful and nervous," she excused herself, regarding her companion wistfully.

Reuben perceived nothing unusual, he was too completely engrossed in his own thoughts to notice. He started at the sound of his own name, looking for an instant slightly dazed and bewildered, like a man awakening from a dream. Then he laid down his book, and left his seat on the piazza. For the last few days the weather had been somewhat threatening, and the farm hands had been working hard to get in the harvest. A lane ran from the house to the road. The Ingleside fields

on the opposite side of the highway stretched down to Pretty River, which in some places was scarcely more than a trout stream, while in others it expanded into a rivulet of respectable dimensions, until it ran into the Georgian Bay.

"I forgot to tell McBean about that scythe. It is well I remembered it," the master of Ingleside exclaimed, as he passed down the steps.

His wife was still watching him intently. Mrs. Raeburn was a tall, fair woman, whose expression conveyed a gentle sweetness rather than strength of character; the corners of her mouth drooped wistfully, her serious grey eyes had a certain breadth of pathetic sympathy. Raeburn went leisurely down the path; then he paused, and looked back. The scene was very peaceful and attractive. The house appeared more like a gentleman's residence than an ordinary farmhouse. It was of frame, painted white, two-storeyed and spacious, with a wide verandah running around three sides. It had been built by an Englishman who had determined to lead in Canada the life of an English country gentleman; but who, not finding the actual conditions of existence answer to his sanguine expectations, had been glad to dispose of the property for less than its original price.

All her life long Elsie Raeburn remembered her husband as he stood with his eyes gravely raised to hers. The picture seemed burnt into her brain. He was not tall, but strongly formed, with square shoulders and well-developed chest. Dark as a Spaniard, he had the blue-black hair and the intensely dark eyes one sometimes sees in the Highland Scotch. Elsie was well aware that those dark eyes could be very kindly and tender, though when excited or annoyed, a spark of red fire flamed in their depths which the wife had learnt to dread, though Reuben Raeburn was a man of few words, who rarely expressed his sentiments with violence of either gesture or language. Just now there was neither lingering softness nor fiery wrath in those uplifted eyes; they had assumed a veiled, inscrutable expression which revealed absolutely nothing. As though impatient of his wife's intent inspection, he turned away, and strolled down the lane. As he reached the gate, a neighbour, James Guthrie, drove past. If Raeburn was intimate with any one in the district, it was with Guthrie. They were both Scotchmen, holding the same shade of religious and political opinions, and regarding the majority of their neighbours with supreme contempt. Guthrie was accompanied by his little son, who, as he espied Raeburn, called out his name, upon which the father immediately reined up his horse; then Raeburn, catching sight of the new arrivals through the trees, hastened his pace, and joined them on the road.

"You are just the man I wished to see," Guthrie began. "About that bay mare, you know."

They talked for perhaps a quarter of an hour about some horses which Raeburn had recently sold.

"I will let you know to-morrow," Guthrie shouted back over his shoulder as he drove away.

He had only proceeded a short distance, when something which he had particularly desired to say to his friend flashed across his mind. He at once drove back to the gate, but there was no trace of the owner of Ingleside to be seen.

"Mr. Raeburn must have returned to the house. Hugh, run up there, and tell him I want to speak to him for a moment."

The youthful Guthrie was rotund of person, jocular of expression, inquisitive of mind. Not finding the person he sought, he went on to the house, where he found Mrs. Raeburn still sitting on the piazza. In answer to his enquiries, she assured him that her husband had not returned to her, and that he would most likely be found in the fields. The little lad nibbled a cake with which he was presented, and professed unlimited admiration of the baby.

"I just wish we had one," he said. "I saw a real black one when I was up at grandmamma's; its mother was washing there. I wanted grandpapa to buy it for me, but he thought perhaps a little colt would be a better present. It had black eyes, and real lovely crinkled hair, and it was so very fat——"

It was only the sound of his father's voice shouting to hasten him that brought the child's confidences to a close.

When little Hugh explained that he had been unable to find Raeburn, his father called out to the men who were working in the fields, asking if they had seen their master; they instantly responded in the negative. As Guthrie's business was not of great consequence, he concluded that it could easily wait another occasion, and drove away.

Mrs. Raeburn remained alone. The evening was fresh, and sweet, and tender, breathing of nothing but peace and blessedness. The flowers were glowing, soft dews falling, and in the distance the sound of

children's happy voices resounded in the golden sunset air. The bare crest of the mountains stood out clear against the sky. Away to the north stretched untrodden wilds, southwards descended lower undulating ranges, with glimpses of bright valleys and deep ravines between. A heavy and sickening presentiment unnerved the soul of the woman who looked out on this wonderland of beauty. Though her love had all the force and steady strength of a disinterested attachment, a moment of miserable disenchantment had fallen upon her. It was an unpleasant sort of spectre with which to be brought face to face. Then softer thoughts intervened. She was overwhelmed with a black pall of shame and self-disgust.

"What an idiot I must be!" she reasoned. "If I had some women's husbands to deal with, I might have something to complain about. In all the countryside there is not a steadier or a quieter man than Reuben—and so respected."

She was glad of the interruption when the click of the gate announced the arrival of a visitor. The new-comer was a very tall man, whose massive form gave promise of great strength; his kindly face was tanned by work and weather; his soft, brown, impenetrable eyes were full of a silent thoughtfulness.

"Oh, David," Mrs. Raeburn exclaimed impulsively, "think how long it is since you have been near us!"

David Crowhurst had seated himself on the steps; he held in his hand some blooms of golden rod which he was regarding gravely. He was a man full of reverence and candour, of slow conviction and instinctive loyalty, with a certain poetic element in the worth which was so practical and real.

"Well, yes, Elsie, I have thought it better so," he answered, his calm brown eyes dwelling on his cousin, his lips just touched with a pathetic smile.

"I never thought you could hold yourself away from us in such a heartless fashion. I did think you were fond of the children."

"Yes, Elsie," simply, "I did miss the little ones' prattle and pretty ways."

The twilight, soft and sweet, was about the two cousins; they could hear the tinkling music of unseen waters, the faint evening chirp of birds. The hills stood before them in the grandeur of cliff and chasm, of solid heights, unexplored ravines, and pathless woods. David was quiet and tenacious rather than passionate. No one but himself could tell how hard was the task which duty was forcing him to fulfil; how, in coming to his cousin's house, he was conquering pride, prejudice, and strong personal resentment.

"Reuben and I had hard words, but it was for your sake and the children's that I stood firm against him, Elsie; that I shall always do so long as a breath of life is left in my body." There was a flash of luminous purpose in his eyes.

Mrs. Raeburn's cheeks glowed with painful heat and colour.

"Reuben thinks that if the money uncle left me could be spent on the land, it would be of more advantage to us than having it lying at interest."

"But, as I told him, his views have nothing to do with the matter. Father settled that five thousand dollars on you, with the express condition that you would never let it out of your control. He had a long head, had father; he bound you by a solemn promise, so as to secure your interest and the children's."

There was a long pause. Then he spoke with a slight quiver in his voice.

"I had to stand firm for father's sake, and you, and the little ones, but I bear your husband no grudge; there is no reason why we should not be friends."

Mrs. Raeburn was by no means sure of this fact, but she made no attempt to clothe her conviction with words. David continued:

"That is what I came to say to-night. Now father has gone, you are all the kith and kin I have. I don't want to be divided from you and the babies, Elsie."

Mrs. Raeburn lifted a startled look to him. There was an unspeakable appeal to his forbearance in that glance; he did not know how to answer its sadness and silent reproach. With an effort to overcome his embarrassment, he spoke quickly.

"I was over at Ross's last night. Who do you think I met there? You remember Hattie Blaine, who was your bridesmaid—Jim Blaine's sister, over the hill?"

"Hattie? I should think so—such friends as we were once. Then she married and went out West. It's a long time since I have heard anything of her."

"She is at home on a visit. I expect things have prospered with her. She actually looks younger than she did when she used to come to our place to see you; just wonderfully well, she looks."

Elsie's quick feminine instincts assured

her that the cousin who had loved her from a child; who, when she married Reuben Raeburn, had been broken-hearted at her loss; had been drawing comparisons, and the contrast had not proved favourable to herself. At this defection of allegiance, a sharp pang smote the fanciful woman to the heart. She felt that she was old and faded, the inevitable result of fretting and hard work. She answered quickly, with a momentary lightening up of her serious eyes, a dilatation of the sensitive nostrils:

"Hattie was always one to take things easy. In the city people don't seem to age as the country people do. It seems as though I have been an ugly old woman for years."

All the poetry in David's life was associated with his cousin. Her sweet gravity, her tender thoughtfulness, the delicate purity of the atmosphere with which his loving fancy had surrounded the maiden of his choice, all formed his most cherished ideal.

"Elsie," he protested, with a tender exultation in his loyalty, "you were the prettiest girl in all the countryside; everybody allowed it."

"That was a long, long time ago," with weary impatience. "I am only twenty-eight. Hattie Blaine was four years older."

"She looks like a satisfied and contented woman." David's eyes sought the most distant range of hills; after an interval he spoke dreamily, as though scarcely conscious of uttering his thoughts aloud. "It's rather a comfort to see any one like that; most people don't seem to get much chance of real happiness."

"Happiness," repeated Mrs. Raeburn, conscious that the word contained both a reflection and a sting.

She longed to declare that she who had married her choice out of all the world; who was blessed with a steady and respected husband, with little children, with substantial comfort and prosperity; was a perfectly contented woman; but as she looked at her cousin's grave and earnest face, the words died away on her lips. Then she broke out impetuously:

"I know Uncle Adam meant me well, he wanted to do the very best he could for me, but I have often wished that we had never touched a cent of his money. Of course, he was the best friend I ever had—he that took me when I was left a little orphan no older than my own Jessie, and treated me like his own daughter. You both spoiled me, you and Uncle Adam, David, letting me have my own way in everything, setting me up like a little queen. The money has been an injury to us."

David, watching her with breathless interest, looked startled.

"Is Reuben's heart still set on getting hold of it?"

Elsie shook her head in emphatic denial.

"Not a word about it has passed his lips for more than two months. Reuben is not a man for talking." She paused. All this mist of pain and irritation appeared foolish even to herself. She had not meant to complain, but it seemed so easy to confide in the relative who for so many years of her life had been the trusted guide, counsellor, and friend. "If he would only talk about it, and have it out, it would be easier to bear."

David suddenly found himself plunged in the depths of doubt and disquietude. He was accustomed to be relied upon; friends and neighbours constantly sought advice from the just, clear-headed man; but here he could offer no counsel, the responsibility was too heavy, the issue too momentous. He rose, standing with bent head and averted eyes, breaking up the conference summarily.

"It is late, I must be going. I came only in peace and good-will. Good night, Elsie."

There was a curt brevity about his words which chilled the disconcerted listener. She tried to force her lips into a piteous smile. Had David, too, changed, like everything else? It had been merely her own folly which had prompted her to believe that in his affection and sympathy he would be as inalterable as the hills.

CHAPTER II. A MYSTERY.

DAVID walked slowly home. He was a man who rarely hurried; even now, rent by the ferment and turmoil of his perturbed spirit, he strolled leisurely along with his head bent and his hands clasped behind his back. The heavens gathered themselves into night stillness, the mountains were grand in soft gloom. The moon wheeled on in her long southerly circuit, and the stars trembled in their infinite depths. David's broad breast expanded in the peaceful evening air. The serenity of Nature entered in and possessed him, laying her secrets lovingly before the eyes which were capable of seeing.

David had loved his cousin deeply and truly, rather than ardently, ever since his

dead father had brought the shy, gentle orphan child to share his home. They had dwelt together in such quiet contentment that the young man never realised the strength of his attachment until the stranger who had recently purchased Ingleside appeared upon the scene; when he awoke to some true perception of his own feelings, Elsie was already the Scotchman's affianced bride. In his magnanimity, David determined that no word or deed of his should cloud his cousin's happiness; he resolved to make it his duty to accept the man of her choice as his friend. Events had not shaped themselves according to his fancy. Old Adam Crowhurst, a man of strong affections, narrow mind, and violent prejudices, had imbibed an intense dislike of his niece's husband. He had always intended his son to marry Elsie, and determined that his handsome property should descend intact to the two whom he loved best in the world. He was sorely mortified and wounded to the core that this stranger should have power to thwart his cherished purpose. Everything that Raeburn said or did irritated the stubborn, choleric old man. Insensibly, almost against his will, David was influenced by his father's ideas. Reuben was reserved, but he instinctively resented the sharp criticism of all his words and actions, the cold disapprobation which he continually encountered from his wife's relations. A strife arose which was the more deadly because it was always veiled and covert. Old Adam was deeply imbued with a conviction that this intruder had married his niece from mercenary motives, and convinced himself that the girl whom he had cherished as the apple of his eye was a neglected and unappreciated wife. Elsie was tenderly attached to her kindred; she was also a loyal and devoted wife. She scarcely understood how the misunderstanding had arisen, but the sense of it tore her heart asunder; she made her life wretched by vain, innocent attempts to bring into harmony the men who seemed to have placed themselves in natural antagonism. She was not a clever or clear-sighted woman, but she had sufficient discernment to perceive that her well-intentioned efforts resulted in an increase of hostility rather than the promotion of kindly feeling.

When Adam Crowhurst died, the smouldering ill-feeling reached a climax. Reuben felt himself outraged by the old man's will; he was seized by a bitter irritation and jealousy; his smothered resentment added a new bitterness to Mrs. Raeburn's life. That his own wife and family should be protected from the one to whom their interests should be most dear seemed an intolerable indignity. It seemed as though out of his grave his enemy had directed a fiery arrow, having keenest power to wound. To insist that the control of this legacy should be placed in his own hands appeared to the Scotchman only a vindication of his own integrity; he could not understand his wife's hesitation, or that she could fail to view the affair exactly as he did. His amazement almost equalled his indignation when Elsie pleaded that she had no resource but to obey the provisions of her uncle's will. David Crowhurst was his father's executor, he was also the determined and strenuous advocate of his cousin's rights. The feeling on both sides was very bitter. On Raeburn's side it had never found vent in loud or angry denunciations, though, on more than one occasion, David was tempted to publicly express his contempt of his kinswoman's husband.

As David walked home he was very sorrowful of spirit. He mistook a temporary paroxysm of impatience and depression, natural in a woman whose nerves were jaded by ceaseless care and toil, for evidence of genuine unhappiness. That Elsie should have burdens and disappointments; that she should be a woman without any support in her difficulties and distresses—the idea itself was profane—a kind of desecration. He would have shielded her from prosaic necessities and everyday wants, but in his common sense, as well as in his stainless integrity of spirit, Crowhurst perceived that any interference on his part could only result in evil. He could not sleep that night for thinking of his cousin; the moist eye, the quivering lip, haunted him. He lay tossing to and fro in the summer darkness, rent by many conflicting emotions. The window was open, and, as he lay, he could see the pale sky beyond, with one great luminous star shining in its pure depths; the night was replete with brooding nocturnal fancies which stung him into painful unrest.

It was in the soft blue of the summer dawn that David Crowhurst opened his door. Though hearts may mourn, the everyday routine must go on, and of all those employed on the large farm, the master was ever the first to rise and go forth. The new day was opening upon a glorified world; a land of light and dews, of silence

and quiet sweetness. The atmosphere was balsamic with the odour of the pines which clothed the hillside; a twitter of birds rippled keenly and blithely through the air; the tranquil morning light and fresh buoyant breeze came like a greeting.

As Crowhurst stood looking out, he perceived a woman rapidly ascending the hillside. Visitors were rare in this lonely spot. Who could be astir so early? He regarded the swiftly-moving form with natural curiosity. Something familiar in form and gait caused the heart to leap in David's breast. His nerves shivered with a prescient thrill as he walked down to the gate. Could it possibly be? Yes, it certainly was Elsie Raeburn who, with her baby in her arms, was rapidly advancing towards him. Her hair was in disorder, her features pale and pinched with the effects of a long night's vigil, her eyes dilated with anxious fear. A wild thought flashed across the farmer's brain. Had her husband ill-treated her? Had she been driven to take refuge with the kinsman who was her natural protector? David's homely, old-fashioned reverence for his cousin made any idea of open scandal insupportable. Even in this moment of passionate wrath, at variance with the calm and even tenor of his temperament, he tried to remember that he must endeavour to regard this grave necessity from every point of view, not to allow affection to blind his sense of justice, and not to permit prejudice to render him intolerant of the husband's rights. He tried sternly to subdue himself, but was quite unable to bring down this sudden excitement to his usual calm. It was David's instinct to be true to the very highest standard. An existence of faith, of deep religious conviction bore fruit in an absolute absence of egotism. Mrs. Raeburn's first words effectually dispelled his delusion.

"Where is Reuben? David, what has become of Reuben?" she panted, as though she had scarcely breath to make herself audible. Her voice vibrated shrilly on the still air; there was no mistaking her genuine anxiety and distress.

"Reuben?" echoed David blankly. "I know nothing of him. Has anything happened? Is there anything wrong?"

Elsie sank down on a large stone beside the gate, white and trembling, scarcely able to contain herself. She began to imagine what a sight would meet her eyes if her husband were carried home lifeless, or at best injured. A vague darkness enshrouded her, she hid her face in her hands. It was only for an instant, yet she roused herself feeling as if hours had been lost by the momentary weakness; as if all the world were standing still, all succour and help waiting, while she sat trying to realise what she feared.

"I thought perhaps he might have come here. I could not rest, I had to look for him."

"Tell me about it, Elsie," David said patiently. "To help you I must understand all about it."

"Reuben never came home last night."

"All night away!" Visions of carefully concealed iniquity in the man he so disliked floated before David's bewildered eyes. "Elsie, answer me truly; is anything wrong? Has this often happened before?"

"Often!" The wife, lifting to his eyes that were large, and worn, and over-bright, flamed into sudden indignation. "What do you mean, David? It never happened before; should I be so frightened if it had? Reuben — the steadiest man! He never went away for a few hours without letting me know where he was going. For days past I have had a terrible presentiment that some evil was about to befall us. Some accident has happened to him. David, you must help me."

"You know I am always ready," taking both her hands in his grasp with a tenderness beyond words, and looking carefully away from her. "Elsie, was there any quarrel between you?"

She shook her head in emphatic denial.

"We never quarrelled. Reuben was never one to say much. What should keep him from his home if not some accident?"

"I thought last night you appeared unhappy—dissatisfied."

"I!" in indignant repudiation of the idea. Was it possible that only last night she had allowed herself to be disturbed by baseless fancies about her own looks and Reuben's moods? While confronted by tragic possibilities, how could such trivial follies dwell in David's mind? Ignoring his question as utterly futile, she clasped his arm tightly, with an impulsive outcry:

"It was for help I came to you. A man can do what a woman can't."

"Come into the house while I harness Black Bess. I will drive you over, and we'll see what we can do."

"No, no, I could not breathe. I will wait here."

He did not attempt to argue or remonstrate. Leaving her, he returned presently with milk, bread, and cheese.

"You need refreshment after that long walk." She turned from the food with a sort of sick loathing. "For the little one's sake you must keep up your strength."

There was so much firmness in his gentle touch that she found herself unable to resist his will.

"It's a day you can ill be spared," grumbled David's head man, old Ben Lamb, as the farmer gave directions for the work to be carried on in his absence. "To take harvest-time for gadding about the country! What would old master say? My, my, what is things coming to!"

"It can't be helped," David decided briefly. "I may not be long away, and you must do your best."

The road wound through the low valley lands, then it ascended a rugged hillside. Sometimes they drove through perfumed woods; sometimes beside the river, whose splashing waves throbbed upon the pebbles. In this sweet prime of the early morning the flowers were in dewy bloom, the trees in their variation of colour basked in the sun; even the road was aglow with drops of shining moisture. Nothing moved but the water, and the trembling birch-leaves, and the saucy little sandpipers that scampered along the mimic beach. It was a sort of consolation to Elsie to feel the wind of the rapid movement in her face as they drove, but her voice was stifled in her throat, and her heart in her breast. When it became necessary to slacken the horse's pace in ascending the hill, the slow progress rendered her desperate. As they neared Ingleside, David roused himself.

"You will likely find him at home, Elsie, laughing at your fright." There was an almost feminine softness about his tone which insensibly soothed the frightened woman's nerves.

He fancied that the obnoxious husband might regard this affair in the light of an escapade, and resent it. In his fairness, David even allowed that some grounds for such an accusation might exist. He was not sure that in similar circumstances he would like his wife to fly, wild with fright, seeking him about the country. He could not understand the panic which drove Elsie, even against her own reason and convictions, to seek his aid, but he was ready cheerfully to undergo any personal inconvenience to save her from anxiety.

"Here, on his own place, I do not see how any accident could possibly happen to Reuben. The river at this season is far too low to drown any one. Where did he spend his evenings?"

"At home, usually. Now, at harvest-time, when everybody is tired out with hard work, he would never start out visiting. He has never been intimate with anybody but Mr. Guthrie. He would sometimes go over there for a smoke and a chat. When one o'clock came I could not bear it any longer. I wakened Lizzie and made her go over to Guthrie's with me." Her heart swelled as she thought of the night passed in frightful waiting for the daylight, in agonised and incoherent prayers. "But they were all asleep; we found it hard to awaken them. Mr. Guthrie seemed to think that it was a joke, but he had seen nothing of Reuben since he had been speaking to him in the evening. Why, there is Mr. Guthrie, now."

Guthrie looked surprised at seeing Crowhurst with Mrs. Raeburn.

"Have you secured the runaway?" he called out cheerfully. At the look of white dismay which Elsie turned upon him, the words died away on his lips.

It was David who explained that his cousin had sought him in her trouble, and the two men consulted together as to what course had best be pursued.

"Depend upon it, he will turn up all right," argued the neighbour confidently. "What could possibly happen to him here at his own door? I could understand if he were eccentric or flighty, but a sober, steady fellow like Raeburn!"

It would seem as though from the moment when Reuben Raeburn stood talking with James Guthrie on the road, he might have sunk down into the depths of the earth. There the evidence paused, and there was no further link of connection to be found. There was no more trace of his presence than if he had ceased to exist. The dusky summer twilight was just settling down on the world when he disappeared, but the road leading from his house to the village of Streatfield was a much-frequented one, and he could have scarcely passed along it without being recognised. The men who were working in the fields remembered noticing him as he talked with Guthrie. Though they had been about the barns afterwards, passing to and fro, they had seen nothing of the master. An alarm was instantly given to the neighbourhood; searching parties were

organised, the country far and near was subjected to the most rigorous examination. No valid reason could be assigned for this sudden disappearance. The missing man had been extremely methodical in his habits; his financial affairs were found in perfect order. As far as was known, he had been a man of exemplary character, and had only a short time previously been elected an elder of the Presbyterian Church at Streatfield. He had been a just if not an indulgent master, and had always been respected, if not warmly liked, by those in his employ. A quiet, reserved man, who never meddled in other people's affairs, and seldom extended any confidence concerning his own, he was not supposed to have a single enemy. Regarding worldly matters, he seemed to be perfectly independent. He owned his farm, had money in the bank, and owed no one a cent. James Guthrie owed him a considerable sum of money, but Guthrie was both honest and substantial; there was no reason to doubt that he was able and willing to settle his debt. There were some who hinted darkly at suicide; but what could induce a man in perfect health, whose circumstances were prosperous, and whose domestic relations were of the most harmonious description, to cut short an existence which promised so favourably?

There was something ghastly and horrible in the idea that a man should thus abruptly disappear—snatched away from the midst of his family ties, from the shelter and security of his own roof. Only yesterday Reuben Raeburn's friends and neighbours had felt that he was one of themselves, absorbed in the same daily concerns, cheerfully engrossed in seed-time and harvest, with a vital interest in all his surroundings. Amidst this simple routine of occupation and regular hours, a thunderbolt had descended out of a cloudless sky, and Reuben had swiftly passed beyond their reach into the regions of illimitable mystery. It appeared impossible to the wife that such poor, passive properties as time, or space, or distance should be able to baffle love; longing and helpless in her ignorance, ready to spend her strength in efforts to recover the lost, that yet uncertainty should be sufficient to vanquish affection at its intensest strain. She went searching through her thoughts and recollections for comfort, and found but little. The darkness seemed to press in and baffle her on every side. While her heart was breaking to find a trace of her husband within those mysterious boundaries where he had passed, there was nothing to satisfy the avidity and yearning of love. So it came to pass that the place which had known Reuben Raeburn would henceforth know him no more.

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 311.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE weather had grown very hot. The soft breezes and refreshing rains, which had kept June cool and pleasant, had given place, with the advent of July, to a dead calm and a cloudless sky, under which London suffocated and baked.

Lady Karslake had come down to her solitary luncheon with a rather indolent and dissatisfied expression of countenance. She did not like the hot weather. Her own house was as cool a spot as was to be met with, but even there the atmosphere was somewhat oppressive; and the sultry glare of the streets was unendurable to her. She had carried on her philanthropic pursuits, under these circumstances, with capricious interest for about a week; but to-day she had rung the bell about half an hour before lunch-time, and had countermanded the carriage for that afternoon.

She seemed to have no very definite notion, however, as to the employment of the time thus thrown on her hands. She dawdled idly over her lunch; and she was still sitting at the table playing absently with her napkin ring, though her meal itself was long since over, when a note was brought in to her.

It was from North Branston, and she opened it lazily. It contained, as she had expected, the address of the family of one of her hospital protégés whom she had intended to visit that afternoon. But it contained something else for which she had not looked. The young clerk, Reginald Austin, had fluctuated in health during the past month as only consumptive patients, perhaps, can fluctuate; growing a little weaker with each return of the sadder symptoms, but having intervals of such comparative ease that his professional attendants alone realised how near was drawing the inevitable end. He and his young wife had retained their peculiar position as the first-comers in Lady Karslake's interest, and she had cultivated them assiduously, doing all, and more than all, that their pride would allow, in the way of practical help; and seeing them both constantly. A brief but not ungentle sentence at the end of North's note told her now that the end had come suddenly, and the young husband was dead.

Lady Karslake sat very still for a moment, gazing down at the letter in her hand. Her eyes were a little wide and startled; but side by side with the touch of awe thus produced, and with the pity that sprang up with it, there was a vague, all-pervading suggestion of an interest that was almost curiosity. She rose abruptly at last and walked aimlessly to the window. She stood there for some moments gazing out unseeingly into the glare. Then she turned mechanically away, and going upstairs to the drawing-room, sat down in her favourite chair and took up a book.

Apparently, however, her attention was not to be fixed. Nearly half an hour passed, and then, as in a sudden flash, the uncertain desire in her face merged itself into decision. She rose impulsively; sent downstairs a peremptory order for the speedy appearance of her carriage; and in less than a quarter of an hour was being driven rapidly northwards.

It was three o'clock when she set out. More than three hours had passed when she returned. She entered the house with

swift, nervous movements that seemed to imply an unwonted state of tension of some sort. The servant who opened the door noticed that her mistress was very pale.

"Dr. Branston is in the drawing-room, my lady," said the woman. "He said he would wait a little when he heard you were out."

Lady Karslake had stopped abruptly as the woman began to speak. She stood still for a moment, and then she went on slowly into the drawing-room.

North Branston was established at that end of the long room farthest from the door, and he rose, as she entered, and came towards her.

"I waited," he said, "because I wanted to see you particularly, Lady Karslake. I have heard of some people——" He had drawn near enough to her to see her face, and he broke off abruptly. "I have heard of some people," he began once more, "to whom you might——" He stopped again, looking at her intently. "Where have you been?" he said gently.

Lady Karslake had made no attempt to greet him. She had come to a standstill as he met her, and was returning his gaze. There was a wretched little parody of a laugh in her eyes, but her delicate lips were twitching slightly.

"I'm glad you're here," she said; her voice was a trifle strained and reckless. "It annoyed me at first, but after all it's only fair that you should know. You are a true prophet—of evil. The experiment, as you called it, has failed. It's over."

She turned away from him with the unreasoningly angry abruptness of acutely painful feeling, and walked inconsequently to the tea-table.

"Why haven't you had some tea?" she demanded. "Don't you want any?"

North did not follow her except with his sombre eyes. His face was unusually troubled.

"Where have you been?" he said again.

He spoke with direct and masterful insistence, and Lady Karslake yielded to him—if yielding it was—with a sudden impetuosity which gave her words the character of spontaneous statement.

"I've been to Camden Town," she said. "I've been to see Mrs. Austin. And she didn't know. I had to tell her."

A harsh exclamation broke from North and his eyes flashed wrathfully.

"She didn't know?" he said. "Why, she should have heard this——"

Lady Karslake interrupted him with a fierce little gesture. Her face was working pitifully.

"What does it matter how it happened?" she said. "It was carelessness of some kind, I suppose. He was only one of a number at the hospital, it was of no great importance to any one there whether he lived or died. It is only to that poor wretched girl——"

A kind of spasm of realisation passed across her face, and her eyes gazed out, from under their contracted brows, with a horror in them which seemed to reflect a momentary, inward vision of the awful contrast existing between the outward appearance, and inward significance, of the same event. The look passed, merged in passionate personal feeling, and she turned vehemently upon North Branston.

"Why have you never told me what a wretch I was being?" she demanded. "You must have known! You ought to have known. And you ought to have told me. What business has any one to play with stories like the Austins' — to make an occupation out of their misery — to find an interest in it? They are real, these sordid little tragedies. There's lifeblood in them. And only what is real and earnest has any right to touch them."

North Branston had not seated himself. He was standing with one arm resting on the ledge of a tall cabinet, his face full of a gloomy feeling, in which all the narrower and harder lines of his face seemed to be submerged.

"Yes," he said, and his tone gave to the word the character of an admission wrung from him before now and against his will. "They are real."

"And how have I treated them?" she flashed out. "As playthings! You were quite right, of course. Life has grown flat to me, and I wanted something to give it a flavour. I was sorry for the people, of course, but I was much more curious about them. That is how I went to Mrs. Austin this afternoon. I was a little shocked and sorry, and I wanted to feel more—you know the kind of thing. And I was interested to see how she would take it."

"It went hard with her?"

"It was real to her," she cried. "Real! Real! Real! Oh, it's a ghastly thing to see heart-break like that, and know that you stand utterly outside it!"

She rose, spurred into physical movement by her intense mental consciousness, and went away to the window, standing there

with one hand holding tightly to the curtains, her slight frame quivering a little.

The movement was followed by a long stillness. North Branston had hardly shifted his position, and it was Lady Karslake who spoke at last. She did not turn round. She had loosened her grasp on the curtain, and there was something relaxed and weary about her whole figure.

"So that's over!" she said; and her voice sounded thin and dreary. "It's rather wretched of me to turn upon you. You didn't know what I was doing. We're much in the same condition, you and I, I suppose—full of failure!" She paused and sighed drearily. "I wonder why I feel so much worse than I did before?" she went on. "I wonder whether it's myself I'm sick of, or the world?"

She turned slowly as she finished, and looked at him, and North moved and came across the room to her. There was a gloomy strength in his face.

"Both, Lady Karslake, I'm afraid," he said.

She looked at him for a moment with a wistful struggle in her eyes.

"You are not encouraging," she said, with a faint, uncertain smile.

"There are discouraging truths which are better faced," he said. "You say that you and I are alike in a sense of failure. Perhaps to some extent we are; but I've gone further than you have, and I tell you this: Half the active misery of your attitude lies in the denial of it. Resignation, Lady Karslake, is a word that has a wretched varnish of sickly sentiment upon it; but it is one of the finest words in the language, nevertheless."

"Resignation?" she repeated. "What do you mean by resignation?"

He paused a moment, looking at her almost sternly.

"I mean a composed acceptance of the inevitable," he said. "An acceptance that does not cry out because it finds the journey long and unprofitable; that realises that there will come an end."

"What end?"

"Ah," he answered in a voice as low as hers, "who knows?"

She turned away, and stood with her head bent. He watched her silently. It was in an odd, tentative voice that she said at last:

"I suppose—there are people who get into touch with trouble—with people in trouble, I mean. I suppose—there is a way."

"There are people who make a way," he answered. His voice had hardened slightly. "But as a rule the manufacture is only another form of your experiment."

She made a gesture as of indescribable repugnance.

"I shall not try again," she said. "You need not be afraid; it is not in my 'ine."

There was another moment's pause, broken this time by North Branston. He held out his hand.

"You would like me to go now," he said gently.

North Branston had a dinner engagement for that evening. On the preceding day the deed of partnership between himself and Dr. Slade-Fenton had been finally signed and sealed, and he was to dine this evening alone with the Slade-Fentons in honour of the occasion. There was an absent, troubled expression on his face as he entered the drawing-room in fulfilment of this engagement, which was not only very unlike the demeanour to be expected of a man whose prospects have recently materially advanced, but which was also somewhat at variance with his usual cynical passivity of countenance.

Miss Kenderdine was not in the drawing-room when North arrived. She put in an appearance only just before dinner, and there was a touch of excitement about her when she did appear, and her lips were set into a determined line. They curved into a brilliant smile to meet North Branston, but even that hardly seemed to relax the tension of her expression.

Those smiles of Miss Kenderdine's had fallen on North Branston during the last month with uninterrupted persistency. He had met her constantly; and on all occasions Miss Kenderdine's cleverest and most friendly conversation, Miss Kenderdine's brightest and most attractive looks, had been exclusively at North Branston's service. That, as the month wore on, the clever conversation should have become a trifle strained and forced in its vivacity, and the looks a trifle fixed and stereotyped, was hardly surprising. The persistent cultivation of an object who remains absolutely impassive and apparently unconscious, under cultivation, is a pursuit hardly consistent with genuine amiability, and wholly inconsistent with genuine gaiety.

To-night, however, Miss Kenderdine had apparently rallied all her forces. The dinner-table conversation, gay and redolent of satisfaction and triumph, as the occasion demanded, was led by her; the toast of

success to the partnership, laughingly proposed by Dr. Slade-Fenton, was seconded by her; and it was she who turned back at the dining-room door with an imperative command that she and Mrs. Slade-Fenton should not be left long alone.

"You two will see plenty of one another in the future!" she said. "You'd better not bore one another too soon!"

It was North alone, however, who reappeared in the drawing-room about a quarter of an hour later. Dr. Slade-Fenton had been called out. Mrs. Slade-Fenton was seated at her little writing-table as her guest entered, and she turned to him over her shoulder.

"You see, I'm not making a stranger of you!" she said in that tone of airy patronage which represented her most genial manner. "I'm going to finish my notes, and you must amuse yourself with Olive."

Miss Kenderdine was seated at the piano at the extreme end of the room; and, as North made a vaguely courteous reply and turned mechanically in her direction, she called out:

"Come and sit over here, Dr. Branston, and I'll play to you."

She did not play, however. She motioned him to a chair facing her as she sat, and then letting her hands fall lightly in her lap, she turned her assured gaze full upon him.

"So it is settled," she said. "Do you know, I'm really awfully glad about it."

North had seated himself, grave and impassive, as if by instinct, in her presence.

"It is very kind of you," he said.

"Of course," she continued, "I've looked at it from a double point of view—as an outsider, and yet as knowing something of the working of the affair—and I can't help knowing what a capital position it is. And do you know, at one time, I was really half afraid you were going to throw it away."

Her voice had dropped a little as though to give a confidential nature to their talk by making it obviously impossible for Mrs. Slade-Fenton to hear it.

"Were you?" said North Branston.

Miss Kenderdine bit her lip, and the colour in her cheeks grew a little brighter. Then she looked at him attentively.

"What is the matter with you?" she said, with a touch of sprightly raillery in her low tone. "You don't seem either so satisfied or so self-satisfied as you ought to be. Are you thinking of the future, of the new possibilities, the new obligations it will bring? You can't have anything more to wish for professionally, that's quite certain." She struck a light chord on the piano. "Is there—anything else you want?" she said.

North Branston did not move. He was looking absently before him. She glanced at him again and struck another chord.

"Is there anything you want?" she said in a slightly breathless voice, "that you hesitate to ask for?"

Her eyes were full upon him, bright with a reckless intensity of suspense in which seemed to be concentrated all the excitement with which her manner had been pervaded throughout the evening. As if influenced rather by their gaze than by her words, which, indeed, he seemed hardly to have heard, North Branston turned his own eyes and met them. A dull red colour crept up to his forehead, and he moved abruptly.

"There are a good many things I want," he said; he spoke deliberately, and in his coldest manner. "But the one thing I want at this moment, Miss Kenderdine, I don't hesitate to ask for. That Brahms Impromptu, please."

With a movement so abrupt as to be absolutely violent, and with a sudden flare of passionately vindictive feeling in her eyes, Miss Kenderdine turned to the piano and began to play. She played well, as far as technique was concerned, with admirable precision and style, if without feeling. She dashed off the tour de force for which he had asked with a brilliancy hardly to be surpassed, and then she rose suddenly from the piano. Her face was rather white now, and the lips were set. She strolled carelessly towards that end of the room where Mrs. Slade-Fenton was sitting.

"Come, Alice," she said. "You've written notes enough. Who are they to?"

She took up the envelopes and read the names, commenting with merciless sarcasm on each of the owners. The last to which she came was addressed to Lady Karslake.

"Lady Karslake!" she said, tossing down the envelope and laughing scornfully. "What's the use of inviting her? She has retired from the world, hasn't she, Dr. Branston?"

She turned upon North, who had perforce followed her, with a movement which was full of a hardly covered spite.

"In what sense, Miss Kenderdine?"

The words came from North very slowly, and with a singular reluctance. He had stopped, involuntarily as it seemed, and was standing facing the girl.

"She has taken to philanthropy, hasn't she?" said Miss Kenderdine with an unpleasant laugh. "She can't pay calls, I hear, because she is always visiting hospitals, and poking into people's homes! We all pose, of course, in this world, but I must say I think that kind of pose is the biggest humbug going."

"We all pose—yes!" repeated North mechanically.

"Such a commonplace pose, too," continued Miss Kenderdine, "especially for a widow! I suppose she found that people didn't make so much fuss with her as she expected."

"I must say I do not like to see a woman so set upon attention," observed Mrs. Slade-Fenton virtuously.

North Branston did not speak. There was a half-bewildered expression on his face, as of a man who is conscious that he is walking in his sleep and dreaming an incredible dream.

"You're her right hand, though, of course, Dr. Branston! I had forgotten that," went on Miss Kenderdine. It seemed as though, having once given play to her tongue, she was unable to stop herself. "You must know what it's all worth a great deal better than I do! How soon will she get tired of it, I wonder?"

As though her perceptions, less self-centred than those of the angry girl, had rendered her vaguely conscious of something odd about North's expression, Mrs. Slade-Fenton interposed.

"Olive!" she said, in stately reproof. "You are letting your spirits run away with you. Lady Karslake is a mutual friend of ours!"

Then with a strong effort North Branston seemed to recover himself. He was very white, and there was a slightly dazed look about him. He made no attempt whatever to answer either speaker. He turned to his hostess and held out his hand.

"Will you excuse me if I say I have some pressing work to do?" he said briefly. "It is getting late."

Five minutes later he was out of the house, walking down the street with a heavy, regular step; his head bent; his figure braced and set as though he were forcing his way through some kind of dense, tangled obstacle.

IN COUNTY FERMANAGH.

I LEFT Dublin by an early train for Clones, and the despotic guard locked us in. We were five men, the others very big, brown, and loquacious. Ere the cars had begun to move, one of my comrades had got out of me the news that I had been staying at the "Imperial Hotel."

"Och, then," he exclaimed, with Hibernian impetuosity, "you'll be one of us—a true friend to the counthry."

Perhaps so, methought, as far as that might serve the Emerald Isle; but I did not proceed to tell him that my tarrying in that hotbed of patriotism was an affair of chance. Still, I had been amused by the earnest talk in the place, and by the excellent meals—at high prices—made by the clergy, who formed the majority of my fellow guests.

Though patriotic and honoured by the patronage of individuals whose names are history, truth to tell I had not been greatly impressed by the building. From its coffee-room I had beheld a Dublin mob in possession of the street, and eventually dispersed by the stalwart police, who were as one to twenty. I had also noticed a great deal of dirt, and the service was not what a Londoner would conscientiously praise. But I gladly speak up for the square-faced waiter who took me in hand at dinner. He was a generous-natured man. When he saw me in evident enjoyment of a dish of saffron-hued jelly, he approached me, and said in my ear in kindly tones:

"Ate the whole of it, sorr, if ye plaze."

Since he made it a matter of such moment, I obeyed him.

But to return to the railway car. There was nothing to see from the windows, except flat green country, with fine trees here and there; and so I smoked, and rejoiced that my four companions had sorted themselves into couples, and got as much conversation as they could desire.

The one pair had dropped upon a common acquaintance as a topic. The acquaintance had, I imagine, recently gone to a better land.

"He was," said one of them, "a divil of a fine boy, he was; well made intirely. But it was the dhrink that done for him."

"Ah, the dhrink!" wailed the other. "It's just the curse of the counthry. If a man has but two pennies to knock together in his pocket, he'll drink three halfpence of it."

"A divil of a fine boy, and there's no denying it," repeated his companion.

The second couple discussed beasts. By that I do not mean the political party opposed to Home Rule, but bovine quadrupeds. They did not agree, either as to the worth per pound of fat beef, or as to the future of the trade interested in the export of hams and sides of bacon.

"Let's have a clear understanding!" the one of them repeated ever and anon when his interlocutor's eloquence rose high.

Very, very seldom did these four men allow their lips to repose; but they did it just often enough for my purpose. I could then mark in them that weakness of mouth which is so astonishing a characteristic of four Irishmen in Ireland out of about every five. The great big hulking fellows—one had pinned his ticket into his pocket for security—had clearly enough and to spare of physical backbone, but I am sorry to say that I should have thought thrice ere relying upon their moral backbone in an emergency.

I lost the advantage of their society at Maynooth. A dark-browed young ecclesiastic took their place, and sniffed at the tobacco smoke; but he was a well-informed young man, and disposed to be more amiable than I had a right to expect. Among other things, he pointed out a reach of bog or a potato garden—I grieve to say I forget which—in which an old woman once found a mediæval chalice of silver, laced with gold, and beaded with gems. The poor old woman sold the thing gladly for a few shillings. It afterwards fetched hundreds of pounds, and may now be seen under a glass cover in the Dublin Collection of Irish Antiquities, as a priceless example of artificer's work in the tenth century.

We also talked about fishing. My young companion almost glowed with fervour on this subject. He was not an angler, however; but I remembered afterwards that it was Friday.

The time passed thus more or less agreeably between talk, and bogs, and glimpses of dark lakes with agitated surfaces—for it was a windy, clouded day—and needless pauses at unimportant railway stations, where a great many bare feet and broad smiles were to be seen; and so at length I came to Clones, and alighted.

There is not a great deal to see at Clones, but what there is I saw.

It is a quaintly situated little market town, its spired church set out on this particular day with flags; and a placid canal gives it the element of water, without which the picturesque seems incomplete. I was struck by the audacity with which the tenants of a score or two of mean houses placarded their doorways with the words, "Entertainment and lodgings here." What form of entertainment? I wondered. The average cuisine of the ill-to-do Irishman, even though an Ulster Irishman, hardly merits the cheerful synonym of "entertainment." But perhaps the word had reference to the excitements of the chase—pursued in the dark hours. And, moreover, when one comes to think of it, the clients catered for by these lodging houses were not, it is probable, likely to be very particular. The impoverished Irishman, on his travels, would find it difficult to be worse housed than at home. This great fact explains why he is so gay abroad—until he imbibes certain of those unprincipled notions which are supposed to aid a man towards prosperity, and against which he has no longer that supreme antidote, his parish priest.

The following stanzas from an ancient ditty are instructive in several ways:

Oh, weep for the day we were forced from our cot,
From our praties and milk and our stirabout pot;
When Judy kept everything piping and hot,
So snug with the cat in the corner.

The pigs, and the dogs, and the childer, agrath!
Lay down on the floor, so dacent in straw,
While the cocks and the hens, they were perched up ava,
Just over the cat in the corner.

Poor Paddy has a sentimental heart, but once his intelligence gets the upper hand of his heart, he is an awkward fellow to take seriously.

Och! Paddy's the boy, with a stick in his fist,
With a spur in his head, and a bone in his wrist,
And a straw round his hat—you must call a gold twist,
Or he'd murdther you all in the corner!

The public square of Clones seemed worthy of a bigger town. The houses round it looked blankly upon the sprawling area—themselves of the ugly, bare-faced, unadorned kind. There were a few hucksters set about the square or diamond, but they seemed occupied with chatter rather than sales. Small blame to them, if they had no more remunerative employment. It is a pity, however, that Paddy at home is as a rule content with the least amount of industry that comes in his way.

I approached and contemplated the old cross in the middle of the diamond. A tatterdemalion of a man got up from the stone seat round its base, and made me a courtesy.

"Your honour," he began, "if I had my rights, I'd not be setting here in my rags."

"Don't let me disturb you, at all events," I entreated.

The poor fellow was immediately recognisable as one of the great and accomplished band of Irish mendicants.

"Indade," he retorted, with something like passion, "but I'd have a low opinion of meself if I kept on me seat while yer honour was by."

What was I to do? Laugh? Or shed the secret, pensive tear of futile compassion?

Right or wrong, I laughed. I was encouraged to do it by the twinkle in the man's weak blue eyes. As well as they could, these trivial orbs said out loud: "Sure you're niver going to be fool enough to think I'm spaking the truth. You and me is one flesh and blood, and it's only an accident you're in a fine coat and I'm so well ventilated. But I'll be even with you in Paradise, my Saxon upstart."

Though his eyes said all this, he blessed me copiously for a copper or two—and straightway resumed his seat.

Oh, Paddy, Paddy, what is to be made of such as you? methought.

It is a well-preserved cross, this of Clones, and has stood thus for some stirring centuries. You may see Adam and Eve and the serpent done on the stone. To my imaginative mind it seemed to look with stolid discontent at the assuming spired church on the hill over against the diamond on one side. Time was when the people of Clones and the district did it more reverence than at present. I dare say some of them still, at certain seasons, go bare-headed on their knees before it. But in these piping times of Protestantism in Ulster things are changed. No longer do the folk of Fermanagh live in fear of raids from the O'Neills and the O'Donnells of Donegal. They find the antagonism of their Catholic neighbours just enough to be stimulating only, and they put little faith in stone crosses.

From the cross it was fit that I passed immediately to the old Abbey in Whitehall Street. "Whitehall Street" in a market town of Ireland of about two thousand inhabitants! It sounds swelling, does it not? And the thatched cottages in it made the contrast the more emphatic.

It is a poor degraded morsel of an Abbey, hedged in with dwellings and work-sheds of a humble, grimy kind. The twelfth century never seemed more ashamed of having lingered on into the nineteenth.

I got the key of the iron wicket from the blacksmith, and waded waist deep in grass and rank weeds among the tumbling walls and the hidden tombs. Two or three of the Clones "childer" watched my movements from the outer side of the grill, and made merry remarks. I tried to draw the ruin, but it would not show an attractive feature. It is just ruin at its worst—neglected, old, and unvenerable.

And so I fled from it, shook the grass-seeds from my legs, and went down a lane towards a far more interesting object, to which half a millennium and more ago the Abbey priests often in their day also fled, with the Church's gold and silver and relics in their hands, and their gowns trailing in the wind.

This is the famous Round Tower of Clones. As the first Irish "cloictheach" or bell-house I had seen at close quarters, it allured me exceptionally, and I made nothing of the nettles and weeds in the circumjacent burying-ground, which did their utmost, here also, to impede progress.

Out of question, they are wrong who see in these tube-shaped buildings merely signal towers or watch houses. From that aspect the Clones "cloictheach" is absurdly situated. It stands at the base of the hill on which the church itself is set.

But our modern antiquaries are agreed about the object of the towers. They were just fortresses several storeys high, and their main protective feature was the elevation above the ground level of the door that gave ingress to them. Of course, the thickness of their stone walls was also adequate to resist such attacks as a band or two of mere vagabond marauders could make upon them. Such rogues did not go about with battering rams, and gunpowder was not then invented. And so the priests and people assembled within, with their portable treasures and a store of provisions, could in fair confidence peer forth at their burning hovels from the tower's lancet windows, and thence listen to the dreadful challenges and threats of the rascals grouped round the tower's base. Patience was the best armour in their store, and it generally served their turn.

The Clones Tower is bereft of its conical cap; otherwise it is a good specimen of its kind. It soars about sixty feet, has walls three feet thick, and an inner diameter of ten or twelve feet.

I yearned to investigate its interior; but

the lady from the blacksmith's shop, who acted as guide, gave me no encouragement. I could not without a ladder get on the threshold, and once there I should see little but rubbish within. The thing stood up like a grey chimney-shaft abbreviated.

"What do you make of it in Clones?" I asked, with fell designs on the woman's mind.

"Make of it, sorr?"

"Yes: what do you think about it?"

"Oh: the folks just think nothing at all about it. It's always been there. Why should we think about it?"

"Was it a dwelling-house?"

"No, sure: it niver was a house. It's too inconvanient for a house—all them stairs to the top, and nothing in size to show for it."

The good soul expressed herself somewhat derisively. I felt obliged to apologise for the suggestion.

"I do wonder," I added dreamily, "what it is."

My humility and wonder touched the lady at last.

"It's this, sorr," she said explicitly, "it's a kind of place for the tombs to be in. That's it, you may depend upon it!"

I left her, I hope, in the comfortable belief that she had told me something both new and true to me. The probability, however, indeed the certainty, is that the tower preceded the tombs by centuries.

As for these grave-stones themselves, had I had time I should like to have inspected them in detail. There were round-headed and square-headed ones—some with emblems sculptured on them which were mysterious to me. Those which carried the skull and cross-bones flanked on the one side by an hour-glass, and the other side by a bell, were, however, comprehensible enough. There were many such.

It was now time to dine, and so I passed down Whitehall Street, and renewed my acquaintance with that diverting entity, the Irish waiter. This one, grease-spotted and broken-coated though he was, bore a face wreathed in sweet smiles, and gave every satisfaction in his calling. And, indeed, I must have been a cynic of a brutally obdurate type not to have felt at my ease, while he pressed me—almost fraternally—to try first the salmon cutlets —"from the Shannon, sorr"—and then the beefsteak with which he indulged me. The big bouquet of roses, tiger lilies, sweet-williams, and clove pinks, which he placed under my nose between the cruets and the dish was, I think, the best thing I saw in this little town.

"There, sorr, now ye'll do, just!" said my friend the waiter, when he had lit the cigar in my mouth, and told me how many minutes I had to spare ere the train left for Enniskillen.

I felt rather like a happy schoolboy sent off by a kind, patronising uncle.

But the train was late, and I had not only smoked my cigar to an end, but the dew was abundant in the air before it sauntered up, with a flag stuck on its boiler, and duly received me. It was a festive day, somewhere. I could not guess, however, whether the flags here and there meant saints, or an incident in national history.

Until night fell in earnest, I looked from the carriage windows at the landscape and sundry churches, like that of Clones and the locomotive, decked with flags. But it soon grew dark, and when I took to Enniskillen's streets I could see little of that celebrated city except its gas lamps and the windows of its dry goods shops. Even in the ten minutes it took me to ascend from the railway station to the heart of the place, I was able to confirm the opinion I had already arrived at about Irish shops. They are the least interesting of any shops in the civilised world. I expect, however, the tradespeople themselves amply make up for this deficiency.

I found the hotels full. At length they made room for me at one, which a man in the street declared was the very best in Enniskillen. I had previously applied at two others which were also recommended in the same civil manner.

"Ye'll not be particular, maybe?" said the blue-ribboned damsel—the blue ribbons were in her flaxen hair, not her bodice's buttonholes—who sat among the bottles in the bar.

"Not too particular under the circumstances," I answered cautiously.

I have ere this slept in a stable. It did not therefore shock me very much to be bedded over a stable. But the horses and their abode were terribly odoriferous; and some of the steeds must have been unwell, they made so much noise in the dark hours.

The girl at the bar whispered something to me as I went into a parlour to take tea.

"What, really?" I retorted, with a thrill of pleasure.

"Oh, yes, and he's a very nice man too."

It was this. The Nationalist Member of Parliament for a northern constituency was in the hotel. Better still, he too had recently ordered tea. In fact, we were, unless I objected, to share the same teapot and eat raspberry jam from the same glass dish.

Unless I objected, indeed! Destiny could not just then have better gratified me.

I don't know what exactly constitutes "a nice man" according to masculine definition; but I saw in a moment that the gentleman's handsome dark face, black moustache, and sweet smile had won him the phrase from the damsel. He was stretched on his back on a curt horsehair sofa when I entered, and his greeting was very amiable.

And so we sat face to face, and I did not find him a monster. For long I did not let out that I knew him. We talked of flax and linen goods—about which I know nothing, except that Belfast thrives on them—and the coming harvest. Suddenly I passed him a trim compliment about the charm Old Ireland had already begun to exercise over me; and hereupon he retorted in praise of London, and the glory of it at night as seen from Westminster Bridge. This gave me an opening, and I told him flatly that I was glad Ulster was represented in the House of Commons by gentlemen of intelligence like himself.

With the removal of the tea-tray we fell to more serious talk over whisky and cigars. The honourable Member insisted on paying for the whisky. He knew more about brands than I did, he avowed. It seemed inconsequent, but I did not oppose him in his kindly desire.

"Sir," he said, on one grave topic, "you must not go out of the country believing in that popular delusion which makes every Orangeman the sworn enemy of every Catholic. There's a lot of fireworks let off, and they keep us lively. That's what it comes to. We've more spirits this side of the Channel than you have. That's what it amounts to!"

"And will it be the same sort of innocent antagonism when you get Home Rule?" I asked.

"That, sir," said he, after a moment's thought and a twirl to one side of his moustache, "is another matter. There may be complications then."

It is an agreeable enough pastime, this trifling with politics in conversation, but anything more unpractical can hardly be conceived. No one, even a Premier backed by a good majority, can prognosticate with assurance about any measure. Time and the erratic tendencies of human nature together play sad tricks with forecasts. And yet I don't know that the tricks need be called "sad" after all. Upon the whole it is a vast deal better to live in a world that is one huge conundrum than to inhabit a globe of which we know the exact origin and future history, and whose people have their little deeds and schemes mapped out methodically, so that all may read what is to come as easily as what has already happened.

My friend the Nationalist Member confessed he did not read much except newspapers. That seemed to me very wise of him, if his eyes were weak, or if he had a capable understudy to do his other reading for him. I fear, however, he had no high opinion of literature as literature. He was interested in a certain branch of trade—being himself a merchant—and he was of course interested in political questions. These two subjects gave him print enough between them.

I remember only one thing more about our talk over our whisky and cigars.

"Nowhere in the world," said the Member, "will you find girls like our Irish girls. Name any virtue you please, and you'll find they've got more than the average share of it."

I mentioned neatness, orderliness, and cleanliness.

"Oh," was the ready retort, "those are habits, not virtues."

This being so, I gave way to him.

When we had taken up our bedroom candles, he glanced at the day's "Freeman's Journal," and pointed out in the list of "Domestic Servants Wanted" an advertisement for "a humble girl."

"You don't see such demands made in the columns of an English paper," said my friend.

I had to admit it.

"If you could have your way," added the Member, "that is what you would have in Ireland. Wanted, 'a humble nation,' instead of a united, determined, independent nation."

We shook hands, and hoped to meet again at breakfast; but fate ruled it otherwise.

The next morning opened wet, or "soft," as they called it. Rain pelted down solidly upon the town and district, as if Fermanagh had not nearly enough moisture in its pro-

digious reticulation of streams and lakes. Twice I essayed to face it, and twice was I driven back. The streets measured mud by inches, and the Enniskilleners walked about cloaked to the eyes.

But the third time I went forth in desperation. Was I to be bested by rain in this town of men whose forefathers did such valorous deeds? Scarcely.

Accordingly, I slopped up the main street, and out into the country towards Lough Erne the larger. I passed the castle to the left—with its memories of the Maguires, who were once lords of the land, and its pride in so stoutly resisting Jacobean lures—and came among dainty cottages, thatched, bowered in red roses, and faced with little gardens radiant in flower beds. This was not an Irish state of affairs; at least, not a type of the abodes of midland or southern Ireland. But of course the Enniskilleners—as testified by their fair proportion of high cheek-bones—claim kindred with the land of cakes and its good qualities. Green meadows yellowed with flag lilies gave other colour to the scene; and before me was Lough Erne's broadening area, dull and rather forbidding under the leaden lashing of the rain.

Seeking shelter and things strange and old, I turned down a dog-rosed lane, and came to the ruins of the Castle of Portora, on the edge of the lake where it is rather a river than a lake. The building has a precious situation, but it is in a state of advanced decay. It hardly afforded me a lee-wall for my purpose.

The only circumstance I know that makes the old castle memorable is its use as a residence by Dr. Spottiswood, who was made Bishop of Clogher in 1621. His lordship had a sufficiently wild time of it here among castle-raiding chieftains and others. He had an enemy, too, in one Sir James Balfour, who stood well in favour at the English Court, and lived in Fermanagh when at home. Sir James's men and others one day relieved the Bishop of "betweene fourty and fifty English cowes worth three pounds apiece." These were rescued in the evening, but the next day a much more forcible attack was made on Portora, headed by the High Sheriff himself—significant fact!—and the Bishop suffered extensively. As a mere incident of this raid, we learn from a contemporary manuscript that "the sheriff would not render three fayre mares and theire coltes. They were so lovelye beasts, He tooke them awaye wth hym." An agreeable kind of Sheriff this, one may assume! The Bishop of Clogher soon had enough of Portora. He removed to Clogher, where it was his fate to be "hampered among mechanicks," and to live uneasily until the Great Rebellion broke out. This sent him in fear of his life to London, where he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

I made shift from Portora to follow the lake shore until I could get a boat to Devenish Island. As I expected, the lessee looked askance at the rain and doubled the tariff. There were, he said cannily—with a Scottish accent—several tombstones in the parish church, telling of the perils of navigation on Lough Erne in stormy weather.

We had a damp voyage, sure enough, and the wet seemed at its worst when I set foot on the grass of the island and ran for the ruins. The Round Tower was what I most desired to see. Had I not read of it in the guide-book, I might have guessed that there was also an Abbey or a Priory hard by to give the Tower its excuse for existence. As a Tower, this of Devenish beats the one at Clones. It stands on a better site, and is both higher and broader. In times of danger its bell would sound effectively across the lake, and one may fancy that boats from either shore then put off briskly towards it. Enniskillen's castle was of course a stouter structure, but scarcely a safer. Herein the Prior and his monks, and all the islanders—the Prior's vassals—might abide while the little green isle was ransacked before their eyes.

The monastery seems to have been founded in the sixth century, and its second patron was a son of Ængus, King of Connaught. Early spelling makes the island known as Daimhinis, or the Island of the Ox. This may either hinge on a legend of a notorious quadruped, or merely recall the excellent pasturage of the little insulated plot of meadow. Be that as it may, Devenish was a famous place. The ruins of its Priory bear a fifteenth-century inscription, which fixes the date of the building at 1449; one O'Flanagan then being Prior. But the Tower is the thing at Devenish, and even in the soaking rain I could distinguish the chiselled heads over the four windows just beneath its conical cap.

It is interesting to know that his lordship of Clogher had a certain profit in the Priory of Devenish. From the Inquisition

of the Fermanagh jurors made in 1609 we learn that "out of the said Abbey the said Bushopp of Clogher had yerelie a refeccion for a daie, or tenn shillings in lieve thereof in his visitation and not else, but not to staie all night."

We of this more liberal century may well marvel at the somewhat churlish limitation put on the hospitality thus doled out to the Bishop. Under the circumstances it seems probable he would prefer the half-sovereign to the day's board without lodging; though if all the Bishops of Clogher had chosen to live at Portora Castle, scarcely a cannon shot distant, there would have been no great hardship in rowing home for a bed after a hearty supper at the Priory.

My boatman exhibited a doleful countenance and saturated coat and nether garments when I returned to him.

"Sure, and it'll take me a week to get the damp out of my bones," he declared.

But it seemed to me I was in the worse plight, for I let him take both oars to keep his blood from stagnating.

"And when will it leave off?" I asked, contemplating the runlets of water on his glistening brown face.

"What! the rain, sir? Not this day. If I was before a judge I'd say the same. I've lived in Enniskillen six year, and I know its ways."

This determined me. I am not an amphibious person, and it really appeared not improbable that Lough Erne would overflow, and mate with the teeming clouds, thereby obliterating Enniskillen as completely as Liverpool has obliterated that poor unoffending little village — parish church and all—which now lies fathoms deep in Lake Vyrnwy of Wales.

I looked in at the Catholic church, and smelt the usual odour of stale incense, and then sped to my hotel, and so to the railway station.

Here, having waited awhile, I took train to the west. There was a pilgrimage excursion in progress, and to me, a callous sceptical Saxon, it was exceedingly droll to listen to the talk of the people who were bent on devoting three complete days and nights to a course of penance. There were men, women, and young girls of the party. The first smoked cigars, while they discussed the penitential programme in store for them. The women talked what I should call scandal: that is, they pecked at the characters of their common acquaintance in a most overt and cruel fashion. And the girls surveyed, with radiant features, each other's towering hats and the tawdry tinsel jewels at their necks and in their ears, and made whispered rapturous comments thereupon.

I surmised that at the holy place whither they were going there were no cigars, that grim silence was the rule, and that the clothes worn had to be of a sombre or even a repellent uniform kind. But perhaps I was wrong.

THE DEATH-WATCH.

"The death-watch ticked beside the hearth last night.
What! the glass rises, and the moon is clear?
An' thou art keen to read the skies aright,
An' not a token of a storm is here?
Oh ay, thou'rt wise as all the young 'uns are,
An' we are fond and foolish—let it be.
The tide is calling on the harbour bar,
The death-watch ticked last night—wait thou and see.

"The banns were out of Sunday, an' the feast
Is set for Thursday, is it? Fine an' rare
They say thy wedding duds are; an' the priest
Is warned to meet thee on the Head up there?
For sure the 'Hilda' will be in to-morrow;
She's due, an' keeps her time, an' all is right;
But though I ne'er was one to croak on sorrow,
The death-watch ticked beside the hearth last night.

"Nay, never don thy brand new frock to walk
Out on the pier, and see the 'Hilda' come!
Hevn't they taught thee better? All the talk
Has been of books and learning in thy home.
Better to know to shun bad luck, I say,
Nor wear thy married gauds afore the time;
Poor lass, I'd fain ha' seen thy wedding day,
I doubt the 'blessing bell' will never chime."

Gaily she laughed to hear the old wife croon.
She wore her bonniest frock to hail him back;
And stayed, till drooping 'neath the risen moon,
She knew that midnight could not bring her Jack.
And ever sadder grew the wistful eyes,
And ever graver looked the fisher folk,
Who watched beside her 'neath the quiet skies,
While on the bronzed lips died the homely joke.

"Collision in the Downs!" A steamer crashed
Into a barque that held a northward course;
A plank or two up on the seaboard washed,
A bulwark stove to tell of sudden force.
The "Hilda" never rode by Whitby Pier,
And, with her fair young face grown worn and white,
The pale girl shivered once again to hear,
"The death-watch ticked beside the hearth that night."

THE WAGES OF SELF-DENIAL.

A COMPLETE STORY.

Most people said John Greer was a fool, when he rented his farm and bought out the general store in Moneyville.

Moneyville was a narrow road which ran up a hill and down again, and had a few houses on either side. It came out of the unalloyed country, and after half a mile of giddy metropolitan life went into the

country again. The Morophobia River grew familiar and fraternised with it for a little space after the manner of rivers, and then rushed off to pour its confidence into the Bay of Quinte. The Canadian Pacific Railway, when it came through, bestowing prosperity on this town and taking away prosperity from that, after the manner of railways, deliberately and of malice aforethought passed it by. It was a slight which might have been borne—for Moneyville had never sought after the inventions of men—but Glasgow, four miles further on, was to have a station of its own, and that was intolerable. Moneyville offered a bonus. The result was a flag-station, which enabled the enterprising ladies of the community to run down to Charrington on market days for ninety cents and return, and dispose of their butter and eggs at the highest market prices without taking the horses out of spring's work or harvesting.

It was at this unfavourable time that John Greer concluded to give up the farm and "live retired" in the Moneyville grocery store. He had never liked the drudgery of the farm; and, now that his wife was dead and his daughter Tilly took charge of the house, there was no one to restrain him. The reasons he gave to an inquisitive public were that Tilly was not strong enough to do the work on a farm, and the twins, when they were old enough to go to school, would have too far to walk; but it is probable that his excuses imposed on nobody but himself. Things did not go on as prosperously in the store as he had anticipated. Trading in Charrington had made the matrons shrewd and wise. John soon found that calico once worth a York shilling a yard now had to be cut down to eight cents, that a three-quart kerosene can could no longer be made to hold a gallon, and that a dollar's worth of sugar made a perceptible hole in the barrel.

Tilly Greer was a lovely girl. Even the Moneyville people could see that, and their good taste was sustained now and again by strangers who, when they were taken to church, never failed to inquire who the pretty girl in the choir was. Her figure was tall, with all its lines full and rounded, and at a time when other girls wore heavy frizzes over their foreheads, she was fond of drawing back her abundance of wavy chestnut hair, and coiling it smoothly at the back of her head. On a Sunday morning when she came into church dressed in an old-fashioned sprigged muslin and leading the twins by the hand, she had more the air of a gentle young matron than of a girl. The young men were shy about speaking to her, and the girls who asked her advice sometimes about their little love troubles would never have believed that she had any of her own.

"Tilly's got her work cut out for her for a good many years ahead," her Aunt Martha used to say.

Tilly herself did not seem to be depressed by the knowledge of it as she gaily directed Mr. Horner, the slim young schoolmaster, in his efforts to lay the table at Mrs. Martha Greer's one spring afternoon. Mrs. Greer was having a "bee." She was a widow, she farmed her own land with far more success than her late husband had ever been able to achieve, and she boarded the teacher and kept her sister with her for company. Mrs. Greer believed in bees.

"Get a lot of men together," she used to say, "an' it's surprisin' the amount of work they'll do in an afternoon. They don't miss the time, you get a good job done, an' it don't cost anything but the supper."

Some twenty of her neighbours, as a result of her opinions, were now scattered over the big hill north of the house, picking stones with cheerful good-humour, and looking forward to the call to supper. Indoors the same good-humour, the same alacrity, prevailed. Mrs. Greer and her sister, Miss Mary, were in the kitchen, running to and fro with very red and flustered faces; and Tilly, who had come up from the store to help wait, was laying the table in the dining-room.

"Now, that's what I call social equality," the teacher said, as he got up from the floor, where he had been kneeling to put blocks under the legs of one table to raise it to the height of another against which it had been placed. "Own up, now, that you couldn't have got along without me."

He was a good-looking, boyish young fellow, and he smiled brightly as he picked up his tin dinner-pail from the chair where he had dropped it when he came in, and carried it into the kitchen. His striped flannel coat and straw hat seemed the embodiment of comfortable elegance in dress.

"You better wash your hands an' come an' help me with the dishes," Tilly called after him with a little air of authority. She was not going to tell him she couldn't have got along without him, but when the cloth was on she didn't know just how many people there were, and Mr. Horner

was sent out to count them. Then she let the spoons fall from her hands on the floor, and her Aunt Martha called from the kitchen to know what was broken, and Mr. Horner shut the door slyly, and they were very gay gathering them up again. After that his probation was over, and he went into a blue and white check apron and became a member of the staff.

Tilly arranged the plates and cups and saucers, and he followed with knives and forks. The silver-plated cruet in the middle of the table was supported on either side by a huge bouquet of marsh-mallows. Beyond these were glasses of radishes not so tall as the marsh-mallows, and these again tapered down to the butter-dish on each side. At one end was a great platter of pink boiled ham; at the other, one of beef. The schoolmaster cut the pumpkin and lemon pies into the customary six pieces each, and Tilly arranged them on the table. He laughingly vowed he had never seen so many varieties of pickles before, and there was cheese, and honey in the comb, and cold rice pudding in tin basins, and there were citron preserves in two tall glass dishes.

"Let's see," said Tilly, meditating, with her finger on her lip. "There's the pot-pie, an' the mashed potatoes, an' the baked beans, an' parsnips an' hot biscuits to go on yet, an'—no, there isn't—it's too bad, but there isn't room for the cakes. We'll have to put 'em here on the dresser, an' pass 'em round afterwards. And now I guess it's about time for you to blow the horn."

The men crowded in, wreathed in grins. They washed their hands and faces enthusiastically in a tub of water that had been provided outside the back door, and trooped in through the kitchen. The younger ones looked at the schoolmaster running round with an apron on, and a flower in his buttonhole just like the one Tilly Greer had in her hair, and kicked one another under the table for glee. John Greer sat at the head of the table. He had shifting, light-blue eyes; and a curly, lazy-looking head.

"Well, Marthy," he said to his sister-in-law as she walked round, flushed and triumphant at the success of her supper, "you've got a good job done on that summer-fallow. I'm real glad I come up an' looked after it."

"Who'd you leave in the store, John?" somebody asked.

John's face grew red, but he turned his head quickly and helped himself to the pot-pie before answering.

"Oh, there ain't much doin' these days, so I just put up the shutters an' left it to take care of itself."

He was not so talkative after that, but nobody noticed. The one impression carried away by the bee-hands was that Mrs. Greer was a go-ahead woman; and one man who bore the reputation of being "noticy," remarked to his wife on getting home that he wouldn't wonder if there was something up between Tilly Greer and the schoolmaster.

That was the beginning of Tilly Greer's love story. People did not speak about it much, because she never walked to church with Mr. Horner, or sat beside him in the same pew, as the other Moneyville young ladies and their admirers did; but it was observed and accepted. Sensible Mrs. Greer found occasion to speak to her niece about the wisdom of her choice.

"I've always said," she remarked, "that sooner or later your father was bound to git married again, an' it's just as well for you to be provided for if you git the chance. Mr. Horner's a real smart young man, an' you might go farther an' fare worse."

And Mrs. Greer had been surprised when Tilly got up with a great blush on her face, and walked away without answering.

But Tilly at work in her kitchen, with bright sunshine and the smell of lilacs crowding in at the door, was weaving the old colours of love and hope into her web. The kitchen was a pleasant place to work in. Its two south windows commanded the gravel road, and blue glimpses of the river among the trees. There was a rag carpet on one half of the floor, and most of the chairs were rockers filled with comfortable flowered print cushions. As she sat in the neat room one morning, cleaning the rice for a pudding, her thoughts were shyly busy with her own happiness. The twins, with their faces freshly washed, and their scant tow-coloured hair smoothed, were seated on the floor in clean blue slips, discussing the relative merits of two rag babies. The wind blew lightly in. There was a big bunch of lilacs in a glass pitcher on the table. Tilly could hear her father's voice in colloquy with some one in the store. Presently the customer went out, and Mr. Greer came slouching into the kitchen.

"Tilly," he said, "I want you to run up to your Aunt Marthy's an' ask her to come down. You can say I want to see her on a

matter of business. Run right along an' don't waste no time. I'll look after the children."

She caught up her hat and ran out. The shutters were up before the store windows, and the door was closed as she passed.

Miss Mary was sitting in a rocking-chair in one of the front windows when Tilly went in. Her little prunella boots were going up and down with gentle persistence as she rocked. Mrs. Greer was bending over a brass kettle in which some very green cucumber pickles were scalding on the stove. She was a larger, more determined-looking woman than her sister.

"Why, yes, I s'pose I could," she said, staring dubiously at Tilly when she had received her message. "I'm pretty busy this morning, but I s'pose I could."

She tied on a clean apron and brought her bonnet and cape.

"You better keep an eye on the pickles while I'm gone, Mary," she said as she closed the door behind her.

Left alone, Miss Mary busied herself with little preparations for dinner. She decided to make an apple-jack as a surprise to her sister. They lived in that close intimacy of affection which has its occasional occurrence of monotony. She was busily engaged in paring the apples when the sound of a buggy stopping outside disturbed her. She ran to the window and saw her sister hurrying up the path, while John was tying his horse.

"Well," said Mrs. Greer, in a voice of suppressed excitement, as she came in, "the crash has fell at last!"

"Oh, what's happened?" Miss Mary cried.

"I've got to go to Charrington with John. He'll be in in a minute to talk it over. He's been going behind in his business every year since he took the store, an' now he can't go on any longer. It ain't only what he's owing to us, Mary. The farm's mortgaged for forty-five hundred, an' he's got lots of little debts besides. He can't never get his head above water again. I tell you it's awful for a man with a family to be as shiftless as that. It ain't nothing but shiftlessness has brought him to this. There ain't a man around that had a better start."

Mrs. Greer's voice rose oratorically. As she spoke she went into her bedroom adjoining the kitchen, and began hurriedly to put on her black cashmere dress. Miss Mary buttoned it for her with fingers that trembled.

"An' now he says that Willy Bolderick's pressin' him for what's coming to him, an' he's went in the bank as far as he can, an' if he waits a day longer it'll all be out an' everybody grabbing for their share. He says he wants to secure us first of all, an' the only way to do that is for me to take the place. He says he thinks anybody would give six thousand for it as it stands, with fifty acres in woodland an' as much more seeded down, an' the mortgage is only forty-five hundred, an' the interest paid for a year ahead. If we take it under the mortgage an' pay him five hundred dollars, we'll have our thousand that he owes us safe an' run no risk. Of course I said I wouldn't do anything till you'd consented, an' I'd consulted Fox and Wilson to see if it was legal."

"But what'll John do?" asked Miss Mary.

"He'll take the five hundred dollars an' git out. It's either do that, or go with nothing at all. The store'll have to go. He says he s'poses we'd let Tilly an' the twins stay in the house till he could send for 'em. He wants to go to-night."

Miss Mary sat down on a chair and began to cry. "Well, I'm sorry for Tilly," she said. "I am sorry for Tilly."

"Yes, she's the one I'm sorry for," Mrs. Greer said, in a burst of indignation. "Do you believe, she never knew a thing about it till John out with it to me. If he'd struck her in the face she couldn't 'a felt worse. But she was herself again in a minute, an' went as cool as could be an' got him up a lunch to eat on the cars. I don't believe she more than half realises it."

"Don't you feel as if it might be shieldin' him too much to take the farm, Martha?" Miss Mary asked timidly. "From his creditors, you know. They might think we knew about it before."

Mrs. Greer turned almost sternly on her little old sister. "I feel as if we had no right to lose a thousand dollars when we might save it," she said. "Mary, I've worked, an' you've worked, an' we've kept things together an' saved what we had, an' he's lazed around an' speculated. It ain't right for us to lose it. I don't feel as if I'd be defraudin' anybody. That company that holds the mortgage'll manage to get what they put into it, you can depend on that. I'll see Fox an' Wilson, an' if they think it's all right, I'll take it."

Miss Mary went to the door and called John to come and get a cup of tea before he went. She tried to act as if nothing unusual had happened. He asked to see

the notes Mrs. Greer held against him, and sat turning them over with shaking hands. When he spoke there was a disagreeable click in his throat. Miss Mary could see a little pulse beating in his cheek. She got up hurriedly, with the faded bloom in her own cheeks heightened, and hastened the arrangements for going.

It was after sunset and she was giving the schoolmaster his tea when Mrs. Greer came back. She had made up her mind that as soon as it was dusk she would go down to the store and bring Tilly and the twins up to stay all night. Mrs. Greer went into her room to take off her best dress, and Miss Mary, after being certain that their boarder wanted nothing more, slipped quietly in after her.

"Well, is he gone?" she whispered.

"Gone? No, he's no more gone than I am," Mrs. Greer answered scornfully.

"You don't mean to say he ain't going?"

"Well, it looks very much like it. I went to the bank as soon as we got in town an' drew the five hundred dollars, an' here it is." She produced a roll of crumpled notes from the bosom of her dress. "You better put it in the cash-box. Then we went to see Fox. 'Mrs. Greer,' says he, 'do you want my candid opinion? Well, you better keep your five hundred dollars. I doubt if the farm would sell for that much over an' above the mortgage. You've got that safe now, an' I'd advise you not to throw good money after bad.' Then he turns to John. 'The best thing for you to do,' he says to him, 'is to make an assignment. Just hand over what you've got, and let your creditors settle it amongst themselves.' An' John kept saying all the time, 'But I must secure Mrs. Greer, my sister-in-law. Mrs. Greer mustn't lose by me.' Fox says to him, 'Well, I'll tell you, there's one thing you can do, Mr. Greer. Nobody can hinder you payin' Mrs. Greer out of what you've got on your person.' John didn't say anything to that, but they went out together an' he's assigned."

Miss Mary gave a little gasp of excitement.

"Oh, we'd ought to try an' keep it quiet! But I s'pose it'll get out. The news'll spread like wildfire."

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Greer said carelessly; "it'll get out, but it might be worse. It's bad enough to fail up, but it's a great sight worse to skip to the States."

Miss Mary's surmise was correct. The news spread like wildfire. Peter Garret dropped in during the evening, and remarked casually that it was going round that John Greer had broke down, saying at the same time that folks were wondering whether he'd managed to cheat the women folks.

"If you ain't in it," he said, "you're the only ones around. He's borrowed wherever he could borrow, an' all his loose stuff is chattel-mortgaged; an' they do say he's got money."

Mrs. Greer thought over this during the night, and her pity turned to wrath. John had borrowed money from her, when he knew he could not pay it back. He had given other people chattel-mortgages, and because she was related to him, and had trusted him, he had given her no security of any kind. The longer she thought of it, the more she felt she had been cheated and outwitted by a scoundrel. She started out early in the morning with the purpose of finding out how much he had borrowed of late, proving he had not spent it all, and making him disgorge. She met little John Henry Briggs, the carpenter who was always looking for jobs, and he told her John had been the ruination of him. He had gone in the bank for him, and the notes were nearly due, and he had no way of paying unless he mortgaged his house and lot. George Elders had lent him two hundred dollars only two days ago. He had bought Sandy Munroe's five cows the week before, and sold them, and had not paid a cent. As John Henry Briggs said, he could sit in his own door and count enough people in sight that he owed to sink a ship. Mrs. Greer went on to her brother-in-law's with rage in her heart.

They were at breakfast when she went in, and the twins sat on high chairs, one on each side of Tilly, looking up solemnly over their bowls of corn-meal and milk. Tilly jumped up almost gaily, and brought her a chair.

"I'm so glad that father's going to stay, Aunt Martha," she said, "that I can't feel very bad about anything else. Things will come round some way, I tell him."

Mrs. Greer paid no attention.

"Well, John," she said sternly, "I've come this morning to see what you're going to do for me. Before you've threw away everything you've got to your creditors, I'd like to know what you're going to do for me."

John laid down his knife and fork. He was trembling with excitement.

"Marthy," he said, "only have a little patience, an' don't turn agin me, an' you

will be secured. That's what I said at first—you will be secured—an' I mean it."

"I don't believe it," cried Mrs. Greer. "John, I believe you've got money!"

Tilly jumped up with a cry of pain.

"Oh, Aunt Martha, he hasn't!" she cried. "He hasn't! He hasn't got any money! He's been a bad manager, maybe, but he's been honest. That's what he's said all along—he's said you must be secured, an' you will be. Only wait a little while, an' don't go back on us. Oh, Aunt Martha, you're the only friend we've got. He is honest."

She threw herself in front of her father as if to protect him.

"Sit down, child," Mrs. Greer said. "I don't blame you."

"Oh, but I can't bear to have you think he hasn't been honest. You've been so good to us. Speak up, father, an' tell her we haven't got any money."

Mrs. Greer laughed bitterly.

"It's no good for you to try an' defend him, Tilly. The whole town's cryin' shame on him. He owes everybody. Let him show what he's done with it, or I'll find out!"

She swept indignantly out of the house. She had not intended to say anything before Tilly, and as she walked back her conscience seemed more than half inclined to reproach her for what she had done. She had scarcely reached home and taken off her bonnet before the door burst open and Tilly entered, breathless and bareheaded.

"Oh, Aunt Martha," she sobbed, "I want to tell you it isn't as bad as it looks. Father's just got fifty dollars, an' that's all. But I own the haircloth furniture, an' the organ, an' the feather beds. Mother gave them to me. An' I've come to tell you that I'll sell them an' give the money to you. An' you will be paid in time. Father says so. Only don't doubt father."

Mrs. Greer took the sobbing girl in her arms.

"Tilly, I believe in you, anyhow," she said. "An' if you say so I'll believe in your father. An' there's just one thing for you to do, an' that's to stop frettin', and be a good girl an' go home an' take care of the children." And Mrs. Greer emphasized her advice with a motherly kiss.

Tilly told herself as she went home that she had done no wrong, and that she would not be ashamed or avoid meeting people. All day there were strangers in the shop and in the house making lists of the things there; and others drawn by curiosity came in to see, as they said, how she was taking it. But she preserved her gentle quiet, kept the house tidy and the twins clean, and had the meals on the table at the proper hours. When she had put the twins to bed at night she came out as usual to sit a few moments on the verandah in the early spring twilight. A whip-poor-will was crying among the trees on the other side of the river, and in the half-light she permitted herself the luxury of a few tears. A cow-bell tinkled in the pasture lot, and the air was full of faint evening sounds. Above all she was acutely conscious of steps that grew nearer and nearer and then paused. Somebody spoke her name, "Tilly," quite close beside her.

She felt the blood rush to her face and her heart almost stop. There was no need to look up to know who it was who was standing on the grass a step below her. He had taken off his hat, and his handsome face, surrounded by its rings of black hair, was quite distinct in the gathering dusk.

"I came to ask you if you wouldn't like to take a little walk," he said.

She put up her hand to hide her tear-marked face.

"No, no; I can't go."

"Not just a little ways?"

"No, thank you, I guess not," she said faintly. "I don't care to."

"Well, it's all right," he said. "I didn't know but you might like to go a little ways."

He struggled to make his tone unconcerned, and moved away a few steps, but something in the dejected figure drew him back again.

"See here now, Tilly," he said, and held out his hand.

She put hers into it mechanically, and felt it instantly covered in a warm clasp.

"See here now, Tilly," he said again. "You think I don't know what's the matter with you. Well, I do, and I don't mind a bit."

She struggled to take her hand away, but he held it fast.

"I don't mind a bit," he said again.

"Oh, yes, you do," she said. "It's an awful disgrace."

"Well, then, it's my disgrace too, for you're my girl. And you can come to-morrow if you've a mind to. I never wanted you to stay slaving here for your folks. We'll be married right away if you say so."

She snatched her hand away from him in sudden agony of fear, and ran quickly o the house and up to her own room, ere she threw herself on the bed with heart beating wildly and strange lights cing before her eyes. Shame and terror herself, and the foretaste of remorse that ites the conscience for a sin not yet mmitted, were all struggling with a new d guilty happiness that was swelling her art to bursting. She lay there motionless, ur after hour, fighting over again the old ttle of duty against inclination. She ard her father come up to his room next hers and move about restlessly. The oon rose and poured a current of white ght into the room. She could hear the ft breathings of the twins asleep in their t at her bedside. She got up and hung er them in an agony of divided love and otherly tenderness. They were so helpless, by and dimpled in sleep—the tender things e had taken from her mother's dying rms, and tended and watched all their ttle life. He had said she must leave her olks. How could she leave her father and hese babies when they needed her so much? With a little stifled cry of misery she dropped on her knees beside them. She elt dimly that she had need to say a prayer, ut no words came to her. Then in queer, lisjointed fashion she remembered one erse of a hymn that seemed to bring omfort. The first line was gone.

"Nor seek a selfish rest—
Nor seek a selfish rest,"

she repeated, trying to recall it,

"Nor murmur when He asks of me
My dearest and my best."

She fell asleep with the words on her lips.

But John Greer did not understand her when next morning, contrary to the country girl's instinct of reticence, she threw her arms round his neck and sobbed out that she would never leave him. He patted her good-humouredly on the head and said she needn't be afraid but what he'd always do his duty by her as a father, and never bring anybody in to be mistress of the house that she didn't like.

TWO PRESIDENCY CAPITALS.

From Madras, "the Cinderella of India," to Calcutta, "the City of Palaces," appears like the proverbial "far cry to Loch Awe," for no contrast can exceed that which exists between the melancholy settlement on the Bay of Bengal, and the brilliant Viceregal capital on the banks of the Hooghly.

The site of Madras was granted to the East India Company in 1638 by an ironical native Prince, who thus expressed his contempt for the mercantile organisation to which he yielded a wilderness of sand lashed by foaming surf, and exposed to the full fury of the north-east monsoon as it sweeps over this dreary and inhospitable coast in howling winds and hurricanes of rain. The ungracious concession was accepted, and the indomitable pioneers of British enterprise in the East obtained a firm footing in this desolate region. The Fort of St. George was built as the nucleus of the future city which finally enclosed an aggregation of twenty-three towns and villages within its boundary, under the comprehensive name of Madras. In spite of an unprotected roadstead, and the further drawback of possessing no navigable river, the new settlement gradually gathered ships of all nations to the port which became one of the principal outlets of Indian commerce, and the meridian of Madras now gives the time to the gigantic railway system which connects the southern capital with the entire peninsula.

"Madras makes the money for Calcutta to spend," is the melancholy assertion of an English official banished to this torrid zone, where life has lost its wonted zest amid an uncongenial environment. An atmosphere of hopeless depression clings to the great settlement which lies under the shadow of Fort St. George; where arsenal, council house, and church represent the threefold influences of religion, law, and order, whereby the destinies of the original colony were moulded. Beyond the grey battlements lies the so-called island formed by two trickling streams choked with sand, and shaded by the palms and banyans in the gardens of Government House. The Mohammedan quarter of Triplicane, containing eighty thousand inhabitants, is flanked by San Thomé, the traditional site hallowed by the martyrdom of Saint Thomas the Apostle; Chintadrepettah, Vepery, and Royapuram form three other important divisions of the city; and the Black Town, defended by stone barriers from the menacing encroachments of the sea, is one of the most characteristic native quarters in India. An extensive view from the noble lighthouse commands the length and breadth of the southern capital, extending for nine miles along the sandy shore, with green suburbs and park-like expanses shaded by

drooping palms and lofty bananas. Dense thickets of tropical vegetation enclose white bungalows and yellow mansions faced with polished chunam, but the riotous luxuriance of flower and foliage fails to enliven the hopeless monotony which seems the character-note of forlorn Madras. Repulsive-looking brown kites flock in countless numbers to the dark avenues of Mount Road, the principal thoroughfare of the city, and act as the authorised scavengers of every street. Even the ubiquitous Indian crow gives place to these ragged and disreputable bipeds, which darken the air as they fly in unpleasant proximity to the heads of riders or pedestrians. The noisy and riotous inhabitant of Madras produces an unfavourable impression upon strangers accustomed to the serene and ceremonious Hindu of the north, and though the tenets of Christianity are nominally held by nearly a third of the Indian population, the purer creed seems somewhat at variance with the conduct of native disciples. The dark skins and rugged features of the population denote barbaric origin, and their violent gesticulations and furious quarrels strike dismay into the victim of their rapacity.

In a primitive handcart known as a "push," and drawn at breakneck speed by a brown native clad in little else but the coating of palm-oil with which his lean body is liberally smeared, we thread the maze of streets to the Cathedral and Botanical Gardens; neither of these favourite resorts possessing sufficient beauty to merit description. The expedition shows a lamentable deficiency of native intelligence, for our willing but incapable conductor, unable to find the exit from a maze of banyan avenues, collapses in tearful despair, until a sympathising vendor of sweetmeats at a wayside stall solves the hopeless problem, and puts him in the right way, accompanying the needful directions with the gift of a sticky but toothsome morsel of unprepossessing appearance and powerful odour.

Colleges, hospitals, and churches stand in green compounds where cows and sheep feed among tropical plants, and the rank vegetation shows traces of neglect and disorder unusual in cities under British sway. In the cool of the evening we drive along the beach to meet the reviving sea breeze, locally known as "the doctor," a welcome visitor at the close of the burning day. A fleet of Massoola boats, built for crossing the heavy surf of this forbidding coast, is just plunging through the sheets of spray. The light craft made of thin planks sewn together with thongs of hide and calked with cocoa-nut fibre, was formerly the only mode of landing; but an artificially sheltered harbour has lately been constructed, enabling passengers to disembark with a more agreeable if less romantic sensation than that of flying through clouds of foam and bumping on the sandy shore, to be dragged to terra firma by screaming phantoms of weird and uncanny aspect.

The catamaran, made of a hollowed log, shares the popularity of the Massoola boat with the fishermen of Madras. The ricketty-looking contrivance can weather any storm in the skilful native hands, and letters are sent by this means to ships in the offing when other communication with the shore is impossible. The catamaran requires steering with a paddle through the raging surf, and though the boatman may be frequently dashed out of the rude skiff by the violence of the waves, he leaps into his frail bark again with the efficiency of long practice, and the catamaran, flying over the crest of the great billows which threaten instant destruction, accomplishes the perilous voyage in safety.

Only four thousand Europeans are to be found in the immense population of four hundred thousand souls, if we exclude the twelve thousand Eurasians who occupy the No Man's Land on the borders of black and white. This hybrid race presents insoluble difficulties to the political economist. Craving for the social recognition denied to a community which originated in the vices of the early European colonists, and scorned alike by the pure-blooded nations of East and West, the sins of the fathers seem visited upon the yellow children of this degenerate stock unto the third and fourth generation. By a curious freak of Nature the Eurasian of Portuguese descent sinks step by step in the scale of colour until he becomes of darker hue than the Hindu of unblemished race, and the hybrid Goanese of the present day combine distinctively European features with a skin of total blackness. The unbalanced Eurasian character, full of conflicting elements, lacks the sterling and enduring qualities which command respect and ensure success, and this feeble type of humanity has hitherto appeared incapable of elevation to vigour of thought and action.

Madras possesses but few local industries, and depends chiefly upon her exports of grain, cotton, and indigo, together with railway freight and shipping, as the prin-

cipal sources of prosperity. Commercial interests have been increased by the opening of the gold fields in Mysore, but the mournful Cinderella of India, oppressed by the burden and heat of the day, seems fated to slave amid the dust and ashes without tasting the fruits of the labour which falls to her lot. Under the guidance of "the enlightened native," we visit the historic Car of Juggernaut, a melancholy relic of India's sacrificial cruelty, and still held in superstitious veneration, though forbidden by Government decree to be removed from beneath the gaudy canopy which now covers it. The heavy wheels, encrusted with grotesque images of the gods, formerly added to the dying agonies of the devotees crushed beneath the weight of the ponderous chariot as it rolled on its murderous way during the great festivals of the Brahmin creed.

As we enter the narrow streets of the Black Town crowds of naked coolies pass along the rough roads, harnessed to heavy drays laden with bales of cotton. The smouldering fires of the Burning Ghât glow with lurid light above the charred and blackened heaps of earth piled upon the bodies of the dead, whose ashes are placed in brazen lotahs, filled up with milk, and then cast into the sea. Gay groups throng the dusky lanes in rainbow robes, high caste maidens are borne in gilded litters to latticed zenanas above sculptured doorways, and a sunset sky of flaming orange transmutes dreary Madras into a city of burnished gold.

Two days later our steamer enters the muddy waters of the Hooghly—said to be the most dangerous river of the world, in consequence of the sandbanks, shoals, islands, and cross-currents, which impede navigation and demand the highest degree of nautical skill. The storms and cyclones peculiar to the Bay of Bengal are unknown in the month of February, and the ship glides over a glassy mirror to the river's mouth in an absolutely windless calm. Shoals of flying fish dart on glittering wing from the blue depths, and wheel sportively through the sunny air; the dim coast-line narrows on either side, and reveals a dense tropical jungle, where tigers lurk in the thickets and cobras haunt the pathless depths. At nightfall we anchor off Saugor Island, a place of perpetual fever, where a lighthouse towers up from a background of impenetrable forest.

The great delta of the Hooghly contracts into the dimensions of an ordinary river between luxuriant groves of palm and bamboo, the feathery fronds bending over the water and sheltering the brown villages which afford picturesque glimpses of rural Bengal. Gold mohur and scarlet poinsettia burn like flames against the darkness of the jungle, and the snowy domes and spires of the "City of Palaces" soar in visionary beauty above the golden mists of dawn. Every port is closed as the vessel approaches the terrible "James and Mary" sandbank, which no ship can touch without capsizing; and, escaping the untoward fate suggested by the broken masts of a recent wreck, we reach a haven of refuge in Diamond Harbour, a palm-shaded inlet, where a navy could ride at anchor. The turn of the tide brings us to Garden Reach, skirted by the white palace of the quondam King of Oude, as the furthest outpost of the Viceregal capital. If Madras be the Indian Cinderella, Calcutta is the Indian Queen. Splendid mansions and glittering shops line broad thoroughfares, and hide among the palms and bamboos of maidan or compound. The white domes of public buildings rise from the dark foliage of casuarina and cypress. Government House, in the centre of a tropical park, bears comparison with the stateliest palaces of the West, and the wealth of the Presidential metropolis is evidenced by the superb equipages which render the fashionable carriage drive a replica of Rotten Row in the height of the London season. The Viceregal liveries of scarlet and gold make a focus of brilliant colour amidst the sea of white which surges up and down the broad "Strand" at the sunset hour, when the Europeans, who parody the proud title of Calcutta into "The City of Pale Faces," crowd along the banks of the river to meet the evening breeze, which rustles the towering palms, and brings fresh life into the sun-scorched city.

Bare-headed Babus in flowing muslins lean over the rails of the side-walk, and criticise the fashionable throng.

Ayahs in gaudy saris and innumerable bangles take their languid charges for the evening airing. Richly-clad natives in gilded palanquins pass swiftly through the crowd, preceded by syces, who clear the way with the long staves which serve as weapons and official wands. Hindu and Moslem, coolie and Khitmutgar, soldier and civilian, swell the throng; and, as darkness falls, the palm-trees of the Eden gardens

stand out clear and sharp in the blue flood of electric light which bathes the scene, bringing the romantic East within the focus of Western science.

A sudden storm flashes up from the south, and peals of thunder rend the air, while torrents of tropical rain transform the streets into raging torrents. The white-robed Babus retreat in headlong flight, soaked to the skin and covered with mud, after a momentary exposure to the sudden tempest. The sluggish Hooghly changes into a foaming whirlpool, boats capsize, and dark figures struggle in the waves. This uproar of the elements is one of the "mango showers" which precede the burst of the monsoon, and according to popular theory set the young fruit. From the numerous trees torn up by the roots it becomes difficult to entertain this idea as an article of faith, but the storm subsides with incredible rapidity, and the yellow Eastern moon shines out with placid splendour upon the tranquil night which follows the hurly-burly of wind and wave.

The noble city of Calcutta was founded in 1690 by Job Charnock, who established a fortified "factory," married a Hindu wife, and lived according to the customs of the country. In 1742 the famous ditch was cut to protect the city from the Mahratta cavalry, but the settlement was captured by the Nawab, and on the nineteenth of June, 1756, a hundred and fifty Europeans were imprisoned in the Black Hole, where only twenty escaped suffocation. Clive regained possession of the spot in 1757, when the fortunes of the city rose until the growing importance of Calcutta made it the seat of the Viceroy and the centre of Government. The Black Hole, haunted by such terrible memories, was destroyed in 1818; the imposing barracks and stately church of Fort William were erected; and the Temple of Kalighat, four miles to the south, gave its name to the flourishing city of Calcutta.

Hindu pilgrims still flock to the ancient shrine where, according to a Brahminical legend, the body of "black Kali," Siva's wife, was cut in pieces by divine decree, and on the spot where one of her fingers fell, a temple was raised in honour of the savage goddess whose traditional life forms a tissue of vice and crime.

The supreme attraction of the neighbourhood is to be found in the magnificent Botanical Gardens, many miles in extent, on the edge of the river, and approached by woodland roads overshadowed by crowding palms. Native villages nestle in bowers of foliage, and a line of tanks reflects the boldly-cut leaves of banana and india-rubber, which rustle their torn green curtains in the breeze. The great Gardens stretch southward in mazes of pillared avenues, where Palmyra palms with fluted stems, taliputs with smoothly polished columns, and clustering shafts of kitool and cocoa-nut, display the varied styles of Nature's architecture. Oil-palm, sugar-palm, rattan and fan-palm grow in rich abundance on this fertile soil; and a superb banyan tree covers an acre of ground, the aisles formed by the perpendicular trunk which grows downward from the tip of every bough being adorned with exquisite orchids, purple, pink, and white, which twine round the dark foliage and root themselves in the mossy stems. Mahogany and teak, sandalwood and ebony enrich these tropic groves, the grey skeleton of the leafless cotton-tree raises a pyramid of scarlet bells to the azure sky, and the orange plumes of the mohur glow with fiery lustre in the vivid sunlight. Purple bougainvillia hangs a sheet of blossom over every crumbling wall, and curtains the marble balustrades of a tranquil lake studded with verdant islets of feathery bamboo. The polished yellow stems creak in the wind which blows freshly up the river from the distant sea, and the heavy scents of a thousand tropical flowers breathe their rich incense on the air. The visionary enchantment of the scene increases with the transfiguring glow of the setting sun; the river flows in a golden tide through the shadowy woods; ringdoves coo softly among thickets of banyan and aisles of palm; and the wreathing orchids, in strange shapes of bird and butterfly, suggest some magical transformation effected by a necromantic spell. As we return to the city the wayside villages are wrapped in silence and slumber; here and there a dark figure rises from a rustic verandah at the noise of our carriage wheels, and a dim lantern in a low doorway attracts a crowd of gigantic moths and flying beetles of green and golden hue; the pencilled shadows of the tall palms darken the moonlit sward; and we turn with regret from fairyland to reality as we cross the great bridge over the shadowy river which divides the City of Palaces from the beauteous world of nature, untrammelled and unspoilt by the incongruous rush and hurry of Western life beneath the starlit Eastern sky.

DAVID CROWHURST'S ORDEAL.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III. TRIAL.

THIS extraordinary and almost incredible incident disturbed the whole country, and particularly the population of Streatfield, in the most remarkable manner. With a natural distrust of any villainous agency, and a strong belief in the powers of accident, there was scarcely a man for miles around who did not start furtive researches on his own account, and who had not a pet theory to account for the mystery. In this fruitless quest David Crowhurst was the guide and inspiring influence; showing in it a devotion, a disregard of fatigue, or loss of time or money, eminently characteristic of the man; but, after weeks of bootless labour, all evidence and investigation broke down. The only conclusion that could be arrived at was that all that had passed on that eventful night had been lost in the darkness which gave no sign.

Streatfield had never before enjoyed the opportunity of exercising itself over so piquant a sensation. The country people felt that their community had acquired a novel interest in the eyes of the outer world, and plumed themselves upon their own importance. Expectations of developements still more startling in character gathered, and grew apace. Every trifling detail of the tragedy was eagerly discussed; and, where the facts were too meagre to satisfy popular interest, glowing imaginations supplied additional particulars free, gratis, and for nothing. It was exactly the season for the ubiquitous reporter to enjoy a delightful summer holiday, the trout fishing being excellent in that locality; so when he failed to detect anything marvellous, he briskly fabricated items to suit the tastes of his readers. Detectives invaded the peaceful country, each one proudly confident that he alone possessed a reliable clue, and vaunting his own superior merits with a brave flourish of trumpets. Then each in turn retired discomfited. Ingleside Farm suddenly acquired notoriety, and became a show place. Pictures of it appeared in the illustrated papers; people planned excursions for the express purpose of inspecting it. Mrs. Raeburn's life was rendered a burden to her by the throng of sightseers — mostly summer visitors from the little town of L——, ten miles distant —who hung about her grounds, trampled on her flower beds, broke down her shrubberies, in their efforts to identify the scene of the tragedy. Groups of curious people strolled slowly up and down the road, with eyes rivetted upon the upper windows. Some bribed the servants for surreptitious information. More adventurous spirits made bold attempts to enter the house. Tongues wagged briskly about Reuben Raeburn and his affairs. People suddenly remembered that they had taken a good deal for granted, and that in reality they knew very little about this stranger who had settled among them. They had never understood very clearly from what part of Scotland he had come, nor had he explained the source from whence his money was derived. He certainly had never alluded to relatives or connexions, and had rarely received letters.

There was still another matter which the Streatfield world discussed, which many fancied threw a partial light on the mystery. It was undeniable that suspicion pointed strongly to David Crowhurst. He appeared to be the only man who had any interest in putting Raeburn out of the way There was no tangible proof, there were absolutely no grounds on which any substantial accusation could be brought against him. Yet, as people debated the subject with hearty relish, they persisted in thinking it strange that the man who had not been near Ingleside for months should have chosen that especial evening for a friendly evening. They reminded each other how fond he had always been of Elsie Raeburn, and how he had never been consoled for her loss. They recalled the violent dislike which old Adam Crowhurst had entertained for his niece's husband. As they summed up the circumstances of the case, airy tongues syllabled the word guilty. David had been popular in the community; he was of a genial nature, liberal, ever ready to do a kindness, never grudging trouble when it was a question of assisting others. Now men and women grew cold and critical to their old favourite; arguing over the enormities of his conduct with a distinct leaning towards the harshest judgement; eagerly gathering every adverse particular which could by any possibility be distorted to his disadvantage; condemning him without waiting for evidence. It was astonishing to hear what very clever stories could be concocted without any foundation whatever. Incidents which had happened long ago, and sunk into oblivion, were revived and endowed with novel significance; care-

less words uttered without any ulterior thought were supplied with a deeper meaning. These things seemed to gather around and hem the suspected man in, until it really appeared as though they were living things, rising up one after another, instinct with a cruel, relentless purpose to crush the life out of him. When first the idea that he was suspected of a crime was suggested to David, his honest pride, which was a fundamental part of the man, was stung to the heart.

David, James Guthrie, and the Streatfield cobbler, Tim Bailey by name, were returning home together one evening from one of those searching parties in which the whole neighbourhood had been actively engaged.

"I can't go in to see that poor woman," insisted Guthrie as they neared Ingleside. "I can't bear to face her. There is nothing to tell her, no comfort to give her. When I find those big eyes of hers fixed on me, I feel mean, as though it were my fault that I can't give her any comfort, yet we are doing all we can."

"I should think so. It would be a poor creature who wouldn't do his best to help her," added Bailey.

Tim was a little, withered, skinny old man; with a hooked nose and prominent chin, a high forehead, and a shining bald head upon which a few stray grey locks stood stiffly erect. He bore a curious resemblance to an elderly and dilapidated bird; and he had an odd trick of holding his head on one side when he spoke, turning eager, shining dark eyes upon his listeners, which increased the likeness.

Crowhurst gave vent to a great labouring sigh which seemed to rend his troubled breast. He was engrossed by the thought of this woman who had no real claim upon his care, to whom he owed no actual duty, who in the world's eyes was merely his kinswoman, whom he loved most truly and purely without any hope of reward. For Elsie's sake, and that of her children, he was willing to stand champion and defender against the world, to show highest faith and constancy, to give every aid of human love and pity, ready to do and dare as any spotless knight of old. What was the strength of his manhood good for, if not to protect these forlorn and helpless creatures cast upon his care?

"If it could only be settled one way or another, she could at least become resigned, and learn to bear it patiently. It's an awful thing for a man to disappear as though the earth had engulfed him. As for foul play, there does not seem to be any cause for it, or any cause for suspicion."

As Crowhurst spoke, both his companions regarded him curiously, doubtfully. A steady purpose had gradually been growing and strengthening in Guthrie's mind, but as yet he had never been able to convert thought into action. There were many circumstances of the case which Guthrie considered inexplicable. Seeing Crowhurst and his cousin driving home together in the early morning light had left an unpleasant impression on Guthrie's mind. When she first missed her husband, why should Mrs. Raeburn have gone so far to seek her husband, when he and his family, Raeburn's most intimate friends, were close at hand? When public opinion accused a man of so heinous a crime, and the whole country was ringing with his name, it seemed only fair that he should be informed of the fact. When he happened to be in Crowhurst's company he could not harbour suspicion; there was something in David's guilelessness and geniality, in his utter lack of egotism, which invariably prepossessed others in his favour. The Scotchman was a bluff, blunt man, who prided himself upon speaking his mind without fear or favour; yet, as he looked into his companion's anxious face, he hesitated. Bailey, however, was a maladroit individual, driven by rash and reckless impulses.

"Why, Mr. Crowhurst!" he exclaimed excitedly; "no one has ever been suspected but yourself."

"Well, I tell you what it is, Crowhurst." Guthrie spoke, regarding David with cool, deliberate speculation. "It's better that you should hear this thing from one that's friendly to you than from those that are not. I don't say that I believe anything against you."

As the candid grey eyes rested frankly on his own, all his vague surmises and suspicions vanished into empty air. He looked around as though expecting comfort and encouragement in the emergency from his companion, but Tim's flighty spirit never furnished a very reliable dependence, he was already repenting his indiscreet utterances in deep affliction of soul.

"In fact, I give no credit to such rumours."

"No, indeed, no one with any sense would ever think of such a thing," interrupted Tim vivaciously.

Guthrie turned on him a broad stare of scornful reproof, which caused the little

man to shrink back abashed, and the Scotchman continued, somewhat unsteadily:

"There are always fools who love to chatter," with a contemptuous glance at his small neighbour. "But suspicion only points to one man——" He could no longer encounter his listener's close and vigilant scrutiny; he paused and faltered. Crowhurst was instantly aroused to keen and vigilant interest. Could it be possible that any clue or enlightenment had been found?

"Strange that I should not have heard," he said slowly. "And that man——"

"Oh-h-h!" came in Tim's shrill, falsetto tones, while his comical little face exhibited a very piteousness of embarrassment.

Guthrie was ashamed of his own momentary weakness. If looks could have had power to annihilate, Tim would have been visited by swift retribution.

"That man is yourself," he said abruptly, then paused, narrowly watching the effect of his words.

"Myself!" repeated Crowhurst, staring from one to the other in blank amazement.

"Oh, Mr. Guthrie! We all know that it is not true."

Tim, with an evident desire to propitiate, quavered reproachfully; but the Scotchman was now fairly launched on his subject, and was conscious that he had committed himself too far to recede. The tentative remonstrance essayed by his alarmed companion only inspired him with a more resolute determination to be true to what he considered his duty, and he obstinately picked up the thread of his discourse where he had dropped it.

"Yes," he insisted, "no one else had any motive to put Reuben Raeburn out of the way. Everybody knows that you and he had quarrelled about Mrs. Raeburn's legacy. You never denied that you disliked him; dozens of people will swear that you have said hard things of him; you were the only enemy he was known to have."

Feeling that he had delivered himself of his sentiments with a vigour and energy worthy of the missing man's friend, Guthrie stood erect and motionless, awaiting in judicial silence some refutation of the charge. Tim was liable to be swayed by chance moods; a moment before he had been hot in Crowhurst's favour, now he veered round, and was frantically eager to add his own quota to the charge.

"Oh, yes, indeed," he cried airily. "I heard you say myself that it was a black day that brought Raeburn to Streatfield. Yes, indeed, I could swear to that."

A sudden horror penetrated to David's heart, and seemed to stop its beating. His wildest fancy had never suggested such a possibility. He stopped, leaning heavily against a tree as though his strength had failed him. Amidst this mist and turmoil of trouble, he divined—with a thrill of certainty that took away his breath—much which he had never before suspected. In a swift, agonised flash of perception, cold looks and cutting words which, in his preoccupation, had passed unnoticed, now forced themselves on his attention. A strange confusion of feeling arose in his mind. In this swift reversal of all things the blackest distrust and depression took possession of the simple, candid, kindly soul. He looked, bewildered, from one to another; at Guthrie, earnest, disturbed, partly distrustful, partly compunctious; at Tim, flippant and volatile, ready at any chance breath to drift on the opposing currents of differing opinions. His tender human tolerance perceived and pitied these people's inability to understand the truth, even while it stung him; yet for charity, for sympathy, honour, good repute, for all that makes existence worthy—perhaps even for life itself—it was to such as these that a man must trust for judgement. The peril of the circumstances; the horror, shame, and publicity; all that so terrible an accusation might mean, made but a slight impression upon his mind. They were but secondary considerations. Since doubt and suspicion so hideous could exist, who could tell how far they might extend? Elsie might regard him as the destroyer of her happiness; the little ones might be taught to consider him their father's murderer. The injustice was intolerable, yet he had to endure it; there was no redress; he knew not how to express his humiliation and sense of wrong. With an instinct of desperation, he strove to meet the miserable necessity bravely. He raised his head with a look of ghastly trouble; his eyes were heavy with pain and perplexity, as he spoke with a long-drawn panting breath of indignation.

"You believe that I raised my hand against Reuben Raeburn? That I made of his wife a widow? That on me rests the guilt of rendering his children orphans?"

"Oh! no, no, indeed!" whimpered Tim in a lachrymose way, melting into vehement self-reproach, and filled with a furious desire to gainsay all he had ever affirmed on the subject. "It's mean and cruel to suspect you; I don't see how any one could. I'll say that to any man."

Nothing in Guthrie's matter-of-fact nature responded to this enthusiasm. He despised Tim, whose sentiments were as unstable as mist wreaths on the river; holding unpractical impulses in contempt, he prided himself upon dealing with more rational and impersonal arguments, but he, too, was human. The sight of the blanched and tremulous face, the lines all drawn with suffering, the pale but compassionate eyes, touched him more than he would have liked to own.

"I only told you what people thought because it seemed right," he pleaded, as though in self-defence. "I can't find it in my heart to condemn you, even if things do look black against you. Everybody knows that there is not a shadow of real proof. If there had been any shadow of real evidence, they would have arrested you right away."

As David's ideas had time to shape and clear themselves, he was conscious of a sharp pain and a choking in his throat—so that he could not move, and could scarcely breathe—yet he contrived to control the tingling in his nerves. In the effort his tones betrayed an involuntary hardness.

"You are the people who should know me best. I have grown from boy to man, going in and out among you, and I defy any, with truth, to say an evil word against me. My life and my father's have been spent with you, yet never a stain has rested upon either of our names. No man or woman has suffered wrong at our hands. I have worked and worshipped with you; with the best I have had to give, I have shared in your joys and sorrows. I am one of yourselves, your very own, yet on the slightest suspicion you are eager to accept my guilt as clear and evident fact; you are ready to set on me, and hound me down, like a pack of ravening wolves."

In the strength and fearless courage of its pose, his tall form, drawn up to its full height, had something impressive and nobly defiant about it which impressed the two keenly interested spectators. He lifted his brown eyes in a perfect blaze of disdainful light. His words were instinct with a deep feeling which almost attained eloquence.

"In that case, all is over between us. Your goodwill and good words are valueless in my sight. I care nothing for them, and will have none of them. Do your worst. I have neither part nor lot with you, and never shall I have again."

He turned away with a proud gesture of repudiation, as though he were casting from him some unworthy object.

The two men remained in stunned silence, watching the tall form as it rapidly ascended the hillside; then Guthrie turned to his companion with a resolute determination to vent his own discomfiture upon another.

"A nice clever fellow you are. I should just like to know if you see the sort of fool you have been making of yourself."

But Tim was using a red pocket handkerchief ostentatiously and unreservedly, and was altogether too deeply overwhelmed by his feelings to be sensible of either shame or scorn.

"We're miserable sinners," he ejaculated piously. "Preserve us a'."

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 312.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Is Lady Karslake at home?"

North Branston's voice rang singularly stern as he asked the question. It was about half-past five—the hour at which he had been used to pay the almost daily visit which Lady Karslake's philanthropic interests had rendered necessary; but his present call was rather a renewal than a continuance of that custom. Nearly a fortnight had passed, during which North had not once presented himself at the house in Wilton Street. Since his last visit to her, on the day on which he had dined with the Slade-Fentons, he and Lady Karslake had not met.

The servant, looking at him with the curiosity engendered by his absence, thought that Dr. Branston looked "cross enough to frighten you," as she subsequently declared to a fellow servant. This private opinion, however, in nowise affected her official demeanour; and, as she answered him respectfully in the affirmative, Dr. Branston strode past her into the house, going towards the drawing-room with so absorbed and rapid a step that for a moment the woman thought he did not intend to pause for a formal announcement of his presence. Then he stopped abruptly, and waited while the door was opened and his name spoken.

Lady Karslake was alone. It may have been the fact that her book was lying unheeded in her lap, and that she was gazing rather absently before her, that gave her solitary figure a lonely look. As North was announced, she turned her head towards the door, a quick flash of expression, compounded of reproach and pleasure, passing across her features.

"Ah!" she said. "I thought you had deserted me, Dr. Branston."

She held out her hand to him without rising; and, the flash of expression subsiding with singular suddenness, certain subtle changes that the past fortnight had wrought in her face became instantly apparent. She was rather paler, there was a droop about her mouth, half contemptuous and half dreary, and her whole expression was tired and inert.

North Branston, however, hardly looked at her. Every line in his face was rigidly set. He barely touched her hand, and then sat down in absolute silence.

Apparently Lady Karslake's nerves were in an unusually sensitive condition, for her visitor's demeanour seemed to irritate her. There was a decided touch of temper in her voice and manner as she said:

"Haven't you any excuses to offer, or don't you consider it worth while to offer them? I suppose you have been rather glad to redeem the time you've felt it your duty to waste on my freaks. Now, isn't that the truth?"

"No, not quite."

The words came from North, after a perfectly perceptible pause, in a low tone which was quite consonant with his appearance; but Lady Karslake did not notice the tone. She seemed to have drifted into a carping mood.

"Not quite; but very nearly!" she retorted. "You are nothing if not uncompromising. Well, I must say that I think you might have let me down gently. I won't say that you might have considered my boredom—I being suddenly bereft of an

occupation"—this with a bitter little touch of self-contempt—"and that you might have looked in upon me once or twice from that point of view. We'll say"—she laughed a little—"that you might have considered my self-esteem; you might have written me a civil little letter to say that all your patients were dying, and you were sorry that you couldn't come and see me until they were dead. I shouldn't have believed you; but it would have pleased me!"

Some vague sense of the drift of her speech seemed to penetrate North's strange concentration, and he replied with grave straightforwardness:

"If you have expected me, I am sorry. I never thought of it." Then, absolutely unconscious of her quick, half-indignant gesture, he went on: "I have not come, Lady Karslake, because I have made a discovery."

His tone was very low; and, though it was steady enough, it was a little hoarse. His hand as it rested on the arm of his chair was tightly clenched; his eyes, very dark and with no light in their depths, were looking, as if under the influence of determined control, not at her, but past her.

His voice or his manner or some more subtle influence seemed suddenly to touch Lady Karslake. With one of those quick transitions of mood which made even her most captious and unreasonable temper charming in the eyes of the people who knew her best, she leaned forward suddenly.

"A discovery?" she said impulsively and gently. "A pleasant discovery, I hope! No?"

"That depends," said North, "upon you!"

He had turned his eyes involuntarily as he spoke the four words, and they were resting now full on her face. As she met them, something seemed to arrest the expression on Lady Karslake's face; a quick sudden flush swept into her cheeks, and then her own eyes altered, dilated into an expression of startled, incredulous amazement, and dropped as if in spite of herself. There was a moment's silence, and then she said quickly, and with a rather breathless laugh:

"That's an enigma! I can't answer it!"

North leaned a little forward.

"I've come to-day," he said, and there was an indescribable vibration in his voice, "to ask you to answer it. I've come to ask you to be my wife!"

"Dr. Branston!"

With all the eloquence of her astonished face, translated into sound in the utterance of the two short words, Lady Karslake had started to her feet. She stood for an instant looking at him, her slender, graceful figure quivering under the intense shock of her surprise; and then as he too rose, she turned away, repeating her exclamation in a lower tone, and with a little catch in her breath:

"Dr. Branston!"

"I've been abrupt," he said. "I should have waited, I suppose, and paved the way somehow. But I could not see you again, knowing what I know of myself now, without saying what I have said. I have never thought of such a possibility as—as this—in connection with myself; and I deal hardly and roughly with it, as I do with most things."

She did not speak. She only stretched out one hand, and rested it upon the tall back of her chair. Her hand was trembling. With a gesture half bitter, half reckless, wholly consistent with the suppressed intensity of his whole demeanour, he went on again.

"And after all, how would delay serve me? You know me. You know the worst of me, I think. I can say nothing of myself to recommend me to you—there is nothing to be said. I am not a young man, and I shall hardly change much now. If you can give me what I ask, it must be out of your own generosity, through no desert of mine!"

With a swift, sudden gesture as though in repudiation of his words, Lady Karslake raised her hand. He stopped involuntarily, and in another moment she spoke, slowly, almost inaudibly:

"I am so amazed!" she said. "So utterly amazed!"

"I know," he answered slowly. "It's natural. I am not the sort of man women—like. If you must say no, so be it! I won't annoy you. I understand that importunity would hardly help me. There's only this I want to say before you answer me." He paused a moment as if to choose his words. "If you had been quite satisfied with life," he said, "I should not have spoken. I should have got over my discovery, as many men have done before me—as I shall probably have to do, as it is—and it would have worked in with the rest. But you are not satisfied. Life has shown its seamy side to both of us more or less. Perhaps we are neither of us what we might have been without that knowledge. But perhaps it might grind less heavily upon you for being shared. Perhaps companionship——"

She interrupted him. Walking with a swift, wild step across the room, she leaned her arm upon the mantelpiece and let her face fall forward on it.

"Oh, wait a moment," she cried in a choked, breathless voice. "Wait! Wait! Let me think. I can't realise! I can't understand!"

Across the set darkness of North's face there flashed a light so sudden and so strangely eloquent that for the moment he was hardly recognisable. For a moment he stood motionless, obeying her, it seemed, by sheer force of the most rigid self-control. Then he crossed the room and stood beside her. The light had left its traces on his features. Their calm was broken up.

"What is it you cannot understand?" he said. "Is it me?"

With a sudden impulsive lift of the head she turned and faced him. Her very lips were white, her eyes were dark and dilated with the intense question that they held.

"No!" she cried. "It's myself! Oh, are we sure? Are we both quite sure?"

"I am quite sure!"

His eyes, dark, steady, glowing, were looking full into hers. He drew no nearer to her, but he stretched out both his hands, half in appeal, half in insistence. Slowly, very slowly, with the colour creeping over her face as if she had been a girl, she placed her hands in his; his fingers closed over them, and he felt her shiver from head to foot. For a moment they stood motionless. Then gently, and meeting with no resistance, he drew her nearer.

"You are quite sure!" he said.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE had been a great dining of a section of the medical profession at one of the big restaurants. Dr. Slade-Fenton and North Branston had come away together, and had passed out of the hall into Regent Street in silence. It had crossed Dr. Slade-Fenton's mind more than once in the course of the evening that his partner's words were even unusually few; and the elder man's lips were just parted to utter something conventional as to cabs and their respective ways, when North, with a glance up at the sky, said deliberately:

"Are you inclined to walk home? It's a fine night."

Dr. Slade-Fenton had not reached his present position in the medical profession without the assistance of powers of perception considerably above the average. He would have risked a considerable stake at that moment on his conviction that the suggestion thus put into words was not complete in itself, but contained a definite desire on North's part for speech with him. He, too, glanced amicably at the sky and said:

"A good idea, really. And our ways lie together for some distance. Let us walk by all means."

They walked along Regent Street at a good pace, the conversation being almost entirely sustained by the elder man. But when they turned into quieter streets, Dr. Slade-Fenton fell silent and a pause ensued. It was broken, much to his companion's secret self-satisfaction, by North Branston.

"Slade-Fenton," he said, "I think it is due to our relations to one another that you should hear from myself, and at once, that I am going to be married."

He had spoken so composedly, in a tone so little in consonance, to his hearer's mind, with the words, that the sense of astonishment created in Dr. Slade-Fenton by those words themselves was intensified into something approaching momentary stupefaction.

"Married!" echoed Dr. Slade-Fenton. "Married! My dear fellow, you—you astound me."

A smile touched the corners of North's mouth.

"Yes!" he assented. "Of course."

"But you also delight me!" continued his partner, beginning to recover himself. "You delight me more than I can say. Going to be married! My dear Branston, I'm charmed to hear it, inexpressibly charmed! A wife and an establishment! The only qualification you needed further. And the lady, my dear fellow, who is the lady?"

"Lady Karslake."

If Dr. Slade-Fenton had ever shared his wife's desire with reference to Dr. Branston and Miss Kenderdine, he had long since realised that they were desires not destined to be gratified. And higher hopes than he had ever entertained would hardly have interfered with his complete satisfaction over the match thus announced to him by his partner. Lady Karslake had money, she had brains, she was well known and popular in the London world. She was, in short, an acquisition to the firm such as he could hardly have hoped for. He expressed himself accordingly; not with a bald revelation of his rapture, but with a discretion and delicacy much to be admired.

"I congratulate you, Branston!" he said, stopping and holding out his hand

with a fine gesture of regard. "One of the most charming women I know. I congratulate you."

"Thanks!" said North with composure.

"Will it be soon?" continued Dr. Slade-Fenton, with a rather admiring sense of his partner's imperturbability.

"Probably," returned North.

"And is the news public property, or am I to understand that I hear it in confidence?"

Dr. Slade-Fenton asked the question with his blandest smile, and North replied with a slight gesture of negation.

"You are the first to hear it," he said; "but there is no secret about it."

They had come to the point where their roads diverged, and he stopped as he spoke. He received Dr. Slade-Fenton's cordial and congratulatory parting words with characteristic coolness and went on his way alone.

The gas was burning low in his room when he reached home; he turned it up mechanically and then stood motionless, looking straight before him with dark, absent eyes. A change had come to his face in the interval which had elapsed since his parting with Dr. Slade-Fenton. It was still composed, and its normal expression was by no means wholly in abeyance; but there was that about it which suggested thoughts and feelings by which their experience was almost puzzled.

North Branston had said truly to Lady Karslake that in all those years of his manhood which were past, no thought of the possibility of love or marriage, where he himself was concerned, had ever entered into his head. What sad suggestion of a warped or undeveloped nature; what hints, grimmer yet, of an all-penetrating sense of isolation, of an instinctive non-expectancy of happiness, that truth contained, it is not possible to say. He was a man, and in the book of his life there was a page which bore the record of a certain period in his early manhood when he had lived a man's life. He had turned that page contemptuously and decisively. It was not in keeping with his temperament. And in turning it he had turned his back, as he believed for ever, on womanhood. Self-revelation had come to him suddenly, touched into life inexplicably, mysteriously, touched into life by the hand of a strange magician — Olive Kenderdine. He had entered the Slade-Fentons' house on that evening, now a fortnight ago, when he had dined there, troubled and heavy-hearted, penetrated through and through with the recollection of Lady Karslake and her trouble, unable to rid himself of the impression she had made upon him. He had left it blinded and stunned by the consciousness of what it was that lay behind his thought of her and his pity for her; dazed and stupefied by his first realisation of the presence within himself of a force hitherto utterly unsuspected. As he stood face to face with Miss Kenderdine, and heard the woman of whom his pitying thoughts were full belittled and made light of by her sneering tongue, a flash of instantaneous conviction had lighted up those thoughts of his once and for all; and he knew what love might mean.

North Branston's was a strong nature; strong in what was worst in it, as it might have been strong on other and finer lines.

Scathing self-contempt, bitter derision, and self-suppression, constituted his first impulse. All that was narrowest and hardest in his nature rose up instinctively to wither what was so incompatible with itself. But there was that in him, stultified, half smothered by his daily life, which, nevertheless, responded to the new movement, which fed it and reinforced it and made it strong to do battle. Slowly and with infinite reluctance North had realised that the unfathomable feeling with which he was struggling with such fierce contempt was not to be dominated; slowly and with infinite reluctance he had realised that it must work its will.

He had submitted gradually and painfully, and then the struggle had changed its ground. The slow torture of doubt had ensued, torture complicated by the reluctance under the influence of which one half of the man despised the suffering of the other half. He might submit; he might acknowledge and accept the new element in his life; but the last word was not with him to speak. The character which that element was finally to assume; whether it was to be an added root of bitterness, or whether it was to assume proportions of so strange a nature that his unaccustomed eyes could hardly trace the shape that glimmered with ever-changing lights before him, was an issue over which he was absolutely powerless.

And now it was all over. The tumult of struggle had passed into victory; the ground swell of doubt had subsided into absolute calm. As he stood there in his silent room, motionless and absorbed, he was confronting a new phase of his existence, a phase in which life and the

world remained for him the half contemptible, half futile riddle to which he had long since hardened himself, but in which one personal factor was changed.

For as long as consciousness had existed in him North Branston had lived among his fellow-men alone. He was to live for the future in close communion with one out of all the world. Sympathy, that large sense of the word including give and take, had been denied him. It was comprised for him in the future in one woman's personality. Love had passed him by. It had come to him now in the guise of that all-absorbing emotion which existing between man and woman isolates them in a dual solitude. It was a change which, introduced thus into a scheme of life in which nothing else was changed; being complete in itself and exercising no harmonising or enlightening influence upon the elements by which it was surrounded; stood out sharp and distinct, cutting off the past from the future as with an absolutely tangible boundary line. He stood there, as it were, between the two on that mysterious and shifting vantage ground, the present, and let the time to come unroll itself before him.

He moved at last slowly and mechanically, and sat down by the table, supporting his head on his hand. The future may attract us and fascinate us, but the past is a part of ourselves, and dominates us. Inevitably and involuntarily, North Branston's thoughts had turned from one to the other. The future centred for him in one woman, Lady Karslake; the past centred for him in one woman, Mrs. Vallotson.

During the long two years that had passed since he had left Alnchester, he and Mrs. Vallotson had not met. Brief notes only had passed between them at long and irregular intervals. He looked back now across those silent months, and out of the years beyond the hard, dark personality so sinister to him rose up and filled his thoughts; he looked back and confronted it, and a vague and softening mist gathered about it—who shall say whether the mist of distance, or an emanation from that future into which the vantage ground of present slipped with every breath he drew? The life which she had shadowed seemed to recede even as he looked at it. The bitterness which the one woman had created for him was neutralised by this strange sweetness brought to him by the other. The isolation engendered by Mrs. Vallotson passed into abeyance in the isolation which Lady Karslake was to share. The chain which no personal effort could break seemed to have yielded gradually and insensibly to the fusion of time and circumstance.

No definite statement of this thought presented itself to North Branston. His meditations were, rather, permeated by it. And out of it there grew, little by little, an instinct towards some such materialisation of the new relations thus rendered possible between himself and Mrs. Vallotson, as might be involved in the suspension of that cold silence preserved between them.

He rose and began to pace slowly up and down the room. With the disappearance of the chain that held them together, the preservation of the distance created by separation seemed to him to have lost its reason. That friendly intercourse could ever be possible between them he neither supposed nor desired. But some kind of courteous communication might be established; something which would recognise those early obligations which North never forgot while ignoring all the rest. It was his marriage which was to complete the work of time in breaking up the old position. The announcement of his engagement was an occasion which lent itself naturally to the establishment of such intercourse as was vaguely present to his mind. The idea which had presented itself to him was a very natural idea, under the circumstances; whether it should or should not be carried into effect, seemed a question hardly worth such restless consideration as gradually expressed itself in his face. Should he go down to Alnchester and announce his intention in person? It mattered very little, on the surface, whether he went or no. But there are impulses and motive powers in all of us which work below the surface; which weigh apparently trivial questions in unsuspected balances; and by such hidden forces the question at issue in North's mind was being debated. He paused in his walk at last, and flung himself into his chair with a strange, half-reluctant sigh. He had decided to go to Alnchester for a night, and announce his intention in person.

And even as he came to the decision, even as he put away from him for ever, save as a memory, the chain which had galled him so long, that chain was close about him still; closer and more all-compelling in that its weight was no longer realised. The chain had formed the man's character; as it had twisted him, so he had grown. He had brought its weight

with him from his Alnchester life to his life in London, and it had killed his ambition, had cankered his success. All that was strongest in him now; the cynicism, the pessimism in which the last two years had confirmed him; the narrow limitation which seemed to be settling down even upon that dissatisfaction which might have led him on to better things; were the outcome of its relentless pressure created by it with the first dawn of his childish consciousness—fostered by it throughout the struggle of his youth; confirmed by it in the unspeakable bitterness of the realisation with which the very freedom of his manhood had come to him. Even his love was subject to its malignant influence. Sombre in tone, concentrated and uninspiring, destitute utterly of that all-pervading light which love—that least imperfect reflex which we know of perfect light—should diffuse throughout man's nature, even his love was inevitably determined in character by the mould in which his mind had thus been cast. Unknown, unsuspected as it might be, the chain which bound him was inextricably entwined with his very existence. It stretched across the boundary line which lay across his life and linked the future to the past.

ANOTHER BATCH OF TRADITIONS.

Not very much of interest is chronicled about Isaac. The original cause of Sarah's jealousy against Ishmael was, it is said, that the elder boy had one day in a spirit of fun pretended to shoot his little brother with his bow and arrow. Though Ishmael was banished, Abraham retained a great affection for him, visited his tent twice during its owner's absence, and on each occasion left a message hinting at the reception Ishmael's wife had given the aged stranger.

The occasion of Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage was, the Talmudists tell us, immediately after his tremendous combat with Nimrod, before referred to. He was faint and weary from his exertions, and, moreover, considered his own death at the hands of Nimrod's people an immediate certainty; when, therefore, he was asked to sell his birthright, he thought, "Of what avail is right of birth to one about to die?" and closed the reckless bargain without more ado. Jacob's constant subsequent fear of his brother was founded on bitter experience. After he had by subtlety obtained his father's blessing,* and had departed for Charan, Esau sent his young son, Eliphas, after him with instructions to kill him, and take the treasure with which he was laden. Only Jacob's utmost eloquence induced the lad to spare his life and to be content with the treasure.

The famous pillow of stones at Bethel—interesting to us as the traditional seat in the Coronation Chair of England—has a yet more marvellous Rabbinical history. Instead of one stone it was originally twelve with which Adam had made an altar, and on which Abel had offered his acceptable sacrifice. After the flood Noah found this altar and sacrificed upon it, and upon it had Jacob's own father, Isaac, been bound ready to be offered when the Divine voice stayed the obedient patriarch's uplifted arm. When Jacob awoke, the twelve stones were found fused into one, a transformation which is suggested by the wording of Scripture where, before his sleep, the pillow is said to be of "stones," but afterwards is referred to as "the stone."

The subsequent reconciliation of Jacob and Esau was, we are told, a very hollow affair. When Esau fell on Jacob's neck it was with the intention of biting him. This he did in effect, but the neck had been miraculously changed into ivory. With this explanation before us it is not surprising to hear that they both wept—Esau for his jarred teeth and Jacob for fear. We know from the Scriptures that Jacob was very wealthy, but to the Rabbis we are indebted for an approximate estimate of his possessions. They tell us that his sheep were so numerous that his dogs alone, of which two went to a flock, numbered one million two hundred thousand!

The Talmudic literature about Joseph is very extensive, and in many respects as extravagant as that about Abraham. D'Herbelot says: "Joseph est regardé comme le Hermes ou le Mercure d'Egypte;" to him were ascribed most of what was wondrous in that most wondrous of all lands; "he taught the most profound sciences, especially geometry." From his early youth he had on his shoulder the mark of a star, significant perhaps of his famous vision, perhaps of the "light and leading" he was to afford to the Egyptians. The Mohammedans say that when quite a

* The Rabbis say that when Isaac discovered the deception he was about to curse Jacob, but suddenly the gates of hell were opened before his eyes, and when he saw the horrors within he added in haste and fear, "Yea, and he shall be blessed."

youth Joseph was charged with theft, but the particulars vary, some saying that he was the victim of a loving trick played by his aunt, who, by accusing him of theft, contrived that he should remain under her control; others that, moved by righteous zeal, he stole and destroyed an idol of gold; others that the offence was almost a virtue, for the theft was that of some food to give to a poor man. The Arabian commentators say that when Joseph was cast into the pit, he was stripped naked, but wore round his neck an amulet which had been placed there by his aunt.* The angel Gabriel came to him, and, opening the amulet, drew out therefrom a robe of silk of Paradise—the very robe with which nearly two hundred years before he had covered Abraham when cast by Nimrod into the furnace. It was Issachar who made the suggestion about dipping the coat of many colours in the blood of one of the flock, and upon Naphtali, the swift runner, devolved the duty of carrying it to Jacob.

The Rabbis are not quite so emphatic as the Biblical account seems to require about Joseph's entire blamelessness in the matter of Potiphar's wife. They say, indeed, that the eleventh verse of the thirty-ninth chapter of Genesis must be read as indicating that Joseph was to some extent guilty in intention, but he was saved from actual sin by the apparition of his father's wraith. The miraculous utterance of a child in the cradle, who was the only witness of the incident, disproved the accusation against him; nevertheless, from motives of policy, he was committed to prison, where he remained for a period variously stated as seven or twelve years. Some assert that the crime of the chief butler and the chief baker was a design to poison Pharaoh; but according to others, it was the more trivial fault of carelessness, some grits being discovered in the Royal bread, and a fly in the Royal wine. When Pharaoh sent for Joseph to interpret his dream, he addressed the young Hebrew in no less than seventy different languages, and Joseph answered each question in the tongue in which it was spoken. The King, it would seem, half questioned the correctness of the interpretation; but Joseph gave him a "sign"—that a child should be born to him, and that on the self-same day his first-born should die.

* It was the contents of this amulet that his aunt had accused Joseph of stealing; the patriarchal law enjoining that a convicted thief became the property of his accuser, she thus secured that her favourite nephew should remain under her charge.

And so it came to pass, and Joseph was raised

From grief and groan to a golden throne,

and with a thankful heart gave praise to God, saying: "He raiseth the poor from the dust, and lifteth up the needy from the dunghill."

After his elevation to power, Joseph, we are told, married Asenath; but there is an Oriental tradition that she was none other than Zuleika, Joseph's former mistress, whom Potiphar's death—to whom she had only been a wife in name—left free to wed the man she had never ceased to passionately love.*

As might be expected, the Rabbinical commentators import a vast amount of dramatic incident into the famous story of Joseph and his brothers. It was by aid of "his cup whereby he divineth"—a magnificent silver cup studded with costly jewels—that Joseph pretended he was able to seat them at the banquet in due order of birth. Benjamin was placed by himself, and exclaimed pathetically: "If my brother Joseph had been here, I should have been by him." Joseph thereupon directed that he should be placed next to himself, and gave him his own "portion." This example was followed by his wife and two sons, so that, as we read, "Benjamin's mess was five times as much" as any of his brothers'. When the cup was discovered in Benjamin's sack, Joseph feigned excessive anger, and declared he would keep the lad in bonds. His brethren, of whom Judah was the spokesman, expostulated, at first humbly, but afterwards in fierce anger. Those terrible warriors who had wrought such havoc upon the Shechemites to avenge a sister's honour, would not tamely submit to the threatened injury to their brother. The dispute waxed fierce; swords were drawn, and Judah in his fury declared that he would confront even the mighty Pharaoh himself. Joseph had meanwhile sent for a guard, and the fearless Israelites found themselves surrounded by some three thousand warriors. Then Joseph again taunted them with having sold and betrayed their long-lost brother, and with having lied to their father about him. Again and again did Simeon protest that they knew not whether that brother was alive or dead. Then Joseph asked if, supposing he could make that brother appear before them, they would let him take the place of Benjamin? And thereupon he called in a loud voice:

* Genesis xxxvii. 36. The Arabian commentators say that Zuleika was a daughter of Pharaoh.

"Appear, Joseph, and sit before thy brethren." A silence of fear and wonder followed his words, and then it was Joseph's own voice which said to them: "Joseph is before you; I am he."

After a while his brethren told Joseph that their father was blind; long years of weeping had thickened his eyes so that they were sightless. Joseph gave to them his mystic coat and directed that they should cast it over the old man's face, and thereupon his sight would return. And so it was, and Jacob and his family came to Egypt, and were welcomed with joy and festivity by the whole nation; and when they met Joseph, the latter's boyish dream was fulfilled, for his father and mother* and brethren bowed down before him.

When Jacob was dead and the funeral train arrived at the cave of Machpelah, Esau and his followers forbade the burial there, declaring that the cave was theirs. Joseph thereupon sent Naphtali, "who was more swift of foot than the roebuck, and so light of step that he could run over the corn and it would not bend beneath him," back to Egypt to fetch the title-deeds. Before he returned, however, a fight arose, and Hushim, son of Dan, slew Esau and cut off his head. And so, to all intents and purposes, was realised the sad foreboding of Rebecca uttered long years before, when her elder son vowed vengeance upon him who had "supplanted" him: "Why should I be deprived of you both in one day?" (Genesis xxvii. 45).

When that Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, the growing strength of the Israelites † was the subject of deep consideration amongst his counsellors. Of these we are told Job, Balaam, and Jethro were the most important. Jethro—who was then named Reuel—advised that the King should cease to oppress these people who were so obviously favoured of God. Job's advice was to the effect that Pharaoh could do whatever he thought best. Balaam—the subtlest of all, blind in one eye and lame in one leg—advised the drowning of the male children. Fire, he said, would not hurt them, for Nimrod tried that on Abraham and failed; sharp steel would to them be harmless as it was to Isaac; the ceaseless toil of Jacob for Laban showed that labour rather benefited than injured them. Water remained, and by drowning might the captive nation's strength be diminished.

Reuel was banished for his wise and merciful counsel, and departed into Midian, bearing with him the staff of Joseph. Job also must have left the court, for it was in his own country that he was to be punished and perfected by his sufferings. The three friends of Job, whose method of consolation has passed into a proverb, lived, we are told, some three hundred miles distant from the patriarch and from each other. They and Job had magic wreaths, each of which showed by its freshness or fading how he whose name was on it fared. They noticed one day that Job's wreath was drooping and sere, and with one accord they set forth to comfort him. The Arabian writers, as well as the Jews, give very realistic descriptions of Job's sufferings which are rather too highly coloured to bear repeating. Their account of the impatience of his wife Rahmat—who, some say, was a grand-daughter of Joseph—and the punishment inflicted on her is somewhat poetical. Despite the terrible nature of his illness, his wife was always patient and assiduous in her care of her husband. One day, however, the fiend appeared to her, and, "more suo," offered to bestow all their former prosperity upon them if she would but worship him. Rahmat told Job of the offer, but the patriarch was so incensed at her having even listened to the tempter that he vowed to give her, when he got well, a hundred stripes. But when he did recover, and was mindful and regretful of his angry vow, God directed him to give Rahmat one light stroke with a palm branch bearing a hundred leaves. And Rahmat, they say, became young and beauteous as in the days of her happy maidenhood, and Job's wealth became enormous in one night, for on two threshing-floors which stood vacant awaiting the harvest, God rained down gold and silver till the precious torrent overflowed their boundaries.

Still prettier is the legend of the little children condemned at Balaam's instance. When the day of execution came, a host of angels flew to comfort and tend the sorrowing mothers, while others coaxed the children to follow them, giving them butter and honey lest they should cry out. When the soldiers were near at hand the earth opened, and the little ones were received into a place of safety. In time the Egyptians ploughed over the spot, and then there sprang up, not the expected

* This was his mother by adoption, Leah, his own mother's sister.

† The Rabbis say that during the sojourn in Egypt the wives of the Israelites gave birth to six or twelve children at a time.

crop of pulse or barley, but the winsome figures of the children, "radiant as little flowers," whom the river had refused to drown, and whom the earth had fed with milk and honey.

Miriam, who, we are reminded, was a prophetess, had foretold the birth and great deeds of Moses, but how great those deeds were we only faintly realise till we read the traditions about him. His very rescue from the water was miraculous, for when Bathia, the daughter of Pharaoh, saw him and wished to reach his bulrush cradle, her arm was lengthened for the purpose by sixty ells. The child was forthwith brought into the presence of Pharaoh,* and then commenced the series of signs and wonders which lasted throughout his life.

IN THE DAYS OF THE GRAND TOUR.

It is somewhat difficult, in an age of swift and easy travel, to realise the care and forethought expended by our ancestors of the last century on what would seem to us the simplest of Continental trips. To travel with any degree of comfort in those days one had need of a very long purse, and, in fact, the Grand Tour was made for the most part by the scions of wealthy and noble families alone. The earlier part of the sixteenth century was probably the period when European travel came to be regarded as a form of education combined with amusement. Bacon devotes one of his essays to the subject of travel, and therein gives much shrewd advice on what to see. The list he draws up would even to-day prove very inclusive, comprising courts of Princes, and "courts of justice while they sit and hear causes"—which the average modern tourist would most likely avoid—colleges, disputations and lectures, shipping and navies, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and "comedies such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort." Many other sights are mentioned, and he concludes by observing: "As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them"—the tendency to sight-seeing of this kind being apparently inherent in the human breast. "Yet," he adds, "they are not to be neglected." The traveller was also to keep a diary, and "carry with him also some card or book describing the country where he travelled, which will be a good key to his inquiry." The essay concludes with a warning as to apeing foreign fashions: "Let his travel appear rather in his discourse rather than in his apparel or gesture . . . and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country." Similar warnings were common in Bacon's time, and long afterwards. Thus we read in "As You Like It": "Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are." Roger Ascham preaches from the same text in his "Scholemaster," in whose time the saying originated that an "Italianate Englishman was an incarnate devil." Bishop Hall also wrote against foreign travel as useless, and probably mischievous. "Many gentlemen," says Purchas, the author of the quaint "Pilgrimage," "coming to their lands sooner than to their wits, adventure themselves to see the fashion of other countries whence they see the world as Adam had knowledge of good and evil with the loss or lessening of their estate in the English paradise, and bring home a few smattering terms, flattering garbs, apeish carriages, foppish fancies, foolish guises and disguises, the vanities of neighbour nations." The guide-books of these days—incipient Murrays and Baedekers—were certainly not all that might have been expected of them. Very often they were anything rather than guides, consisting of a variety of moral discourses of little practical value to the unfortunate traveller. One of the most interesting as well as amusing of these early handbooks is entitled, "Instructions for forreine travel, shewing by what Cours and in what Compasse of time one may take an exact survey of the kingdomes and States of Christendome and arrive at a practicall knowledge of the languages to good purpose." This work—printed at the "Princes Armes in Paules Churchyard" in 1642, begins with verses comparing Prince Charles to the Black Prince. The author—Howell by name—has a great deal of good to say on behalf of travelling, and he has no patience with home-biding folk who never leave the parish in which they were born. "Such

* Pharaoh, according to the commentators, was cousin by marriage to Moses, having married a niece of Amram.

slow and sluggish people may be said to be like Snailes or Tortoises in their shells crawling always about their own home, or like the Cynique shut up always in a Tub." The first country that is most requisite for us islanders to know is France, "and the younger one goeth to France the better because of the hardnesse of the accent and pronunciation which will be hardly overcome by one who has passed his minority, and in this point the French Tongue may bee said to be like Fortune, who, being a woman, loves youth best." After which pretty conceit the author advises the ingenuous youth when he gets to France to retire to some university to learn the language. Information may be picked up by the enquiring mind from a chat with "some ancient nunne."

"They speak a quaint dialect," he informs us; "and besides, they have most commonly all the Newes that passe, and they will entertain in discours till one bee weary if he bestow on them now and then some small bagatels as English gloves, or knifes, or ribands."

He recognises, however, that there is a certain amount of peril in acquiring knowledge after this fashion, though the conversation had to be carried on with the nun from behind a grating.

After wintering in Paris, "that hudge though dusty Theater of all nations," the traveller was to go next to Spain, passing through "Gascoigne and Languedoc," and stay awhile at Madrid, "for I know no other place secure enough for a Protestant gentleman to lie in by reason of the residence of our Ambassador." After going through "South Spaine" at the fall of the leaf, he was to "take the gallies to Italy" from the port of Barcelona, and be careful to get up the art of navigation. Genoa does not seem to have possessed a good character in those days, for the author tells us that it had become proverbial of its mountains that they were without wood, its sea without fish, its women without shame, and its men without conscience—a pretty heavy indictment for the "superb" city. Englishmen are exhorted not to brag of their superiority, for "it is too much observed that they suffer themselves to bee too much transported with this subject to undervalue and vilifie other countrys."

When the traveller returned by way of Venice, Germany, and the Low Countries from this trip of three years and four months, he was to be careful to bring home something "that may accrue to the publique benefit and advantage of his country, and not draw water to his own mill only." He should therefore "pry into the policy and municipall lawes of other States and Cities." The expenses of the tour were calculated at fifty pounds per annum for a servant, and three hundred pounds for his own expenses for a similar period, "including Riding, Dancing, Fencing, the Racket, Coach hire, together with his apparell," a sum amounting to about one thousand pounds of our money.

Interesting as the diaries of the private traveller of those days would prove, few are readily accessible, treasured up as they are among the archives of many an old family. But in the case of authors and others, whose fame has proved more than transitory, the records of their foreign travels have in most cases come down to us. Thus we have a fairly full account of Milton's journey to Italy. He arrived in Paris in April or May, 1638, but of his impressions of the French capital we would gladly have heard more. He was received by the English Ambassador, Lord Sligo, with every civility, and obtained from him an introduction to the learned Grotius. For the rest we have Anthony Wood's opinion, "that the manners and graces of that place were not agreeable to his mind." In August he reached Florence by way of Nice and Genoa, and spent much of his time in the polite and scholarly intercourse of the Academies. At Rome he heard Leonora Baroni, the first singer of her day in Italy, at the Palace of Francesco Barberini. On his second visit to Florence he visited Galileo—kept a prisoner by the Inquisition for his scientific faith for long, but now allowed to return to his villa near Arcetri. From Venice Milton shipped to England a collection of curious and rare books, and a chest or two of choice music. Crossing the Alps to Geneva he was back in England in August, 1639; for though he had intended to visit Sicily and Greece, he tells us: "I considered it dishonourable to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands while my countrymen were striking a blow for freedom."

Another traveller who left his native land with his mind fully stored with classic lore was Addison, and the influence of his travels is to be met with in much of his writing. Crossing from Dover to Calais in the summer of 1699, he spent nearly eighteen months in France. He then went for an Italian tour, twice crossing the Apennines, and in December, 1701, passed

over Mont Cenis to Geneva and other Swiss towns, and extended his tour to Vienna. After visiting the Protestant cities of Germany he spent some time in Holland, and returned to England in the spring of 1703. When he reached Paris, Louis the Fourteenth was in a devotional frame of mind, and Addison found French literature reflecting the same spirit.

"There is no book comes out at present," he writes, "that has not something in it of an air of devotion. Nay, ye humour is grown so universal that it is got among ye poets, who are every day publishing Lives of Saints and Legends in Rhime." Of his impressions of Paris we know nothing, but he remarks on the beauties of Fontainebleau: "There is an artificial wildness in the meadows, walks, and canals, and ye garden instead of a Wall is fenced on the lower end by a natural mound of Rock-work that strikes the eye very agreeably," he writes to Congreve. He gives an amusing criticism of Le Brun's paintings at Versailles, where his most Christian Majesty was represented "under ye figure of Jupiter throwing thunderbolts all about the ceiling, and striking terror into ye Danube and Rhine that lie astonished and blasted a little above the Cornice."

In Paris he met Malebranche, who was anxious about the adequate rendering of his works into English, and Boileau, the old poet and critic, who was presented with a copy of the "Musæ Anglicanæ." He made a long stay at Blois, and remarks with a good deal of shrewdness on the national manners as seen there. He considers the French the happiest nation in the world. "There is nothing to be met with in the Country but Mirth and Poverty. Ev'ry one sings, laughs, and starves." Their conversation he thinks agreeable, but they never mend upon a second meeting. "Their women," he continues, "are perfect Mistresses in the art of showing themselves to the best Advantage. They are always gay and sprightly, and set off ye worst faces in Europe with ye best airs." In Italy he felt at home.

> Poetic fields encompass me around,
> And still I seem to tread on classic ground,

he writes in his poetic epistle to Lord Halifax. The sense of the picturesque was also not wanting in him, as in so many other travellers of that age.

"The fatigue of our crossing the Apennines and of our whole journey from Loretto to Rome, was very greatly relieved by the variety of scenes we passed," he tells us, and then goes on to speak of the rude prospect of rocks rising one above another, and so forth, quite in the modern manner. The poet Gray spent three years abroad which produced a considerable influence on his character. On the twenty-ninth of March, 1739, he started with Horace Walpole from Dover, and on the day after their arrival in Paris, dined at Lord Holdernesse's to meet the Abbé Prévot d'Exiles, the author of "Manon Lescaut." He mentions the famous comic actress Jeanne Quinault as reminding him of Mrs. Clive. It was during the journey to Italy that the estrangement with Walpole, arising from the trivial matter of a pet spaniel, arose. At Rome Gray saw the English Pretender "displaying his rueful length of person." While staying at the Grande Chartreuse he installed in the Album of the Fathers his well-known Alcaic ode beginning, "Oh tu severi religio loci." This book, though not the poem, perished during the French Revolution. How different was Gray's comfortable mode of progression to that of Goldsmith, who had but a guinea in his pocket when he started on the Grand Tour, and according to Boswell "disputed his way through Europe." What his journey was like can be gathered from the pages of "The Traveller" or "The Vicar of Wakefield."

The Continent, and Paris in particular, has rarely seen a more brilliant succession of visitors than in the years 1762 and 1763. In January of the former year Sterne reached the French capital, and was at once received within the charmed circle of the philosophic salons. "My head is turned," he writes to Garrick, "with what I see, and the unexpected honour I have met with here. Tristram was almost as much known here as in London. . . . I have just now a fortnight's dinners and suppers on my hands." Wintering in the South of France in those days was no light undertaking, as we can gather from the minute directions which Sterne gives to his wife and daughter when setting forth for this purpose. "Give the Custom House officers what I told you, and at Calais more if you have much Scotch snuff," he writes, and complains that "they have bad pins and vile needles here," i.e. in France, and thinks it would be advisable to bring with them a strong bottle screw, and a good stout copper tea-kettle. In the midst of these minute particulars he constantly commends them to the care of Providence, and it is satisfactory to know that they

arrived safely at Toulouse after a three weeks' journey. In October, 1765, Sterne set out on his Sentimental Journey through France and Italy.

Edward Gibbon remained three months in Paris during the year 1763, but does not tell us all that we should like to know about the men and manners of that interesting period, though visiting the houses of Madame Geoffrin, Madame Helvétius, and the Baron d'Holbach. During his stay there Louis Racine died, and also the novelist and poet Marivaux, whose works were so eagerly read by Gray.

Hume arrived in the French capital at the latter end of the same year, and entered into the life of the "salons," then at the height of their reputation, with much zest. D'Alembert and Turgot were among his closest friends. Flattery was shown him on all sides, and the children of the Dauphin learnt by heart little polite speeches about his works.

Gibbon meanwhile was studying various antiquarian works on Italy at Lausanne, and later on conceived at Rome the idea of his great work. "It was at Rome," he writes, "on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind."

Such are some of the more memorable events in the lives of these men of letters during their travels on the Continent—travels which made the deeper impression on their minds from the comparative difficulty and unusualness of such expeditions in those days. Even much later on the comfort and expedition was not sensibly increased. An interesting series of hints to "Persons travelling from Britain into France" appears in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1786. From them we gather that no such thing was to be had in France as ready furnished lodgings, and that it was impossible to board in a "genteel family," and extremely difficult to get into "genteel company." The author also remarks that this keeping of good company is attended with some expense, a man must game, he must keep a carriage, and he must dress according to the fashion, and adds: "North Britons wish to get into good company, but do not wish to spend their money idly, either because they have it not to spend, or because they wish to make a better use of it. There is only one advice to be given to these gentlemen: they must either resolve to part freely with their money or to keep out of good company." An interesting account of a Tour in South Holland in 1793, made by a Leicestershire clergyman, is to be found in the same magazine for that year. Starting from Harwich, he had first of all to obtain a permit from the post office agent at a cost of twelve shillings and sixpence, and on returning to his inn found a Custom House officer "waiting to rummage" his portmanteau. He had then to lay in stores for the voyage, among which were a "couple of small neats' tongues," which cost the sum of eight shillings. They set sail in the "Diana" schooner with a crew consisting of a mate, two stewards, and thirteen sailors. The boat carried four four-pounders, two two-pounders, and six swivels by way of armament. There were fourteen passengers, including an English family who were going to spend a few years in Switzerland. "After weighing anchor the Government dispatches for the Minister at the Hague were fastened to a heavy weight of lead, that they might be instantly sunk in case any of the enemy's ships should appear." Most of the unfortunate passengers became sick early in the evening—they had started at half-past three in the afternoon—and must have been glad to land at Helvetsluys between eleven and twelve o'clock the following day. For the passage one guinea was paid, a half-crown being given to the steward and a shilling to every sailor.

Into his subsequent adventures we cannot follow him, but he makes a curious remark about the Dutch women, who had "black patches stuck upon their temples which, I was told, were not regarded so much in the light of beauty spots as amulets against the head ach."

Between 1770 and 1780 there would appear to have been a regular service of boats running between Dover and Calais, as we gather from a contemporary work. The author says: "The packet boats cross daily; they are safe and their captains well known. These from Calais to Dover are English. They only charge ten shillings, but they put you to further charges by obliging you to get into a boat a mile from shore whenever you do not arrange with the captain to land you at his own expense and risk. If you are rich you can have a little vessel to take you over for five Louis and land you at the harbour without further charge. You must give the sailors—of the packet boats — half-a-crown for drink, without

which portmanteaux, night-caps, pistols, eatables, and, above all, bottles of Burgundy become invisible."

In the "Annual Register" for July the first, 1782, we, moreover, hear that "a communication was opened between Dover and Calais, and four English and four French vessels appointed to sail alternately between each port." With this innovation the earlier period of Continental travelling comes to a close. The opening of the Continent after the long revolutionary war, and again after Waterloo, caused large numbers of Englishmen to go abroad. Paris was the first point of attraction, and in 1814 appeared the first English guide to that city—Galignani's Picture of Paris. Mariana Starke's Letters from Italy were indispensable at this time, and a little later on appeared her "Guide for Travellers on the Continent," which was published by John Murray in 1820, and led to the subsequent issue of the famous guide-books of that name.

A VERY MODERN HISTORIAN.

A COMPLETE STORY.

He was a very clever young man indeed. He was fully justified, as his friends were, in taking himself seriously. It was expected of him to make a great figure in the world, and to cover the name of Higgins with glory; and he intended to fulfil all that expectation. What he failed to take seriously enough was the limited spending power of the modest sum of money his father left to him; and the fact that an income must be his first consideration, glory a very distant second. And he did not take the spirit of the age seriously enough. He believed the two to be one and indivisible.

With his blushing University honours thick upon him, he settled down to a literary career as being alike glorious and remunerative. He had made a special line of history, and he set to work upon historical biography. He noticed very little history in the market; he imagined it must therefore be required. He had never cared for political economy, or believed in the regulation of supply by demand. There was no doubt that the public were lamentably ignorant of history—apt to look upon all the centuries behind them not even as a preface to their little day, still less as the earlier, necessary, and explanatory chapters thereof, but as quite another story. Of such few historical personages as were enumerated by school primers, they had wildly false impressions. He did not care to attempt working exhausted mines or bottomless pits, such as the character of Henry the Eighth or of Mary Queen of Scots. He would pioneer the public to comparatively unbroken ground. He would introduce it first to Cardinal Ximenes and his times. The Reformation, the Spanish Inquisition, and the opening out of the New World should take their right proportions, coming incidentally into the plane of the picture. On what foundation were current ideas more vaguely and erroneously constructed?

He spent three years, infinite pains, and all his money over his history, keeping himself fed and clothed, and travelling in quest of the necessary information. Then he sent the precious MS to the best publishing house. It was returned within a fortnight, accompanied by a polite and appreciative letter, regretting that there was no present demand for information on the subject of Cardinal Ximenes. It was a blow, and an annoying financial inconvenience; but Higgins, after a day's despair, took courage, and sent it to a less illustrious house. Again it returned, this time with a flattering criticism and a generous offer to furnish the author with an estimate of cost of production, advertising, and so on, if he wished to bring the book out at his own risk. They regretted, et cetera, et cetera, no demand for, et cetera, et cetera.

He had only just money enough in hand to keep himself going on the most ascetic lines for a few weeks longer. He had his MS. back, and sent it to another publisher, and to another, and another, and to all of them. Nobody would purchase his book, or bring it out except at his own sole risk. The public cared nothing for Cardinal Ximenes, and no publisher cared to undertake to make them care. It was a most interesting work—to the author, no doubt—but it threw no new light upon present day problems, and the public was interested in no other problems.

He was in a fury of disgust and misery. His contempt for the many-headed fool, the common throng, was so violent that it must have strangled him prematurely had he not found relief in words. Prematurely only; for he had no choice but to hang himself or put a bullet through his head at once, as soon as he should have flung his Parthian arrow at the foe. Then he could die in peace, knowing how it would squirm and smart.

There was nothing left after but to die. He had no money. He was already too old

to take up another profession with success, and he was not quite so insane as to try literature any farther.

He fell upon his last quire, and his writing-pad. The winged words flew from his burning pen. It was such fascinating work that the days too flew uncounted, and he needed little food besides tobacco. The words drew him after them, fiercely masterful. He needed to make no journeys now after material, not even to the British Museum opposite. He had material in abundance under his hand; in those substantial, ragged-edged, type-written piles scattered all over the room. He had nothing to do but, as it were, write in negations of all he had said therein.

He wrote at the rate of eight thousand words a day, and in ten days he had finished. There was enough for one volume, and one was enough for his vengeance. He laughed hysterically for an hour at what he had done, and then rushed with his packet to a publisher's office.

He chose a publisher hitherto untried; first, because of course this was not history; secondly, because though he firmly intended to retire that night and for ever from life and battle and reputation, he did not wish the author of "The Real Ximenes" to be identified with the serious and cultured historian of "Ximenes and the Catholic Queen," Arthur Higgins, of Balliol. He called himself now by a Greek initial pseudonym. The common fool was prone to shudder all the more painfully at a scourge from an unknown, unseen hand. He returned to Museum Mansions to burn his original MSS. and die as on a funeral pyre.

He sat down first, and turned them tenderly over. It amused him to recall, as he skimmed here and there over the thin purple and white pages, how he had parodied this and that. He had proved Ximenes to be a buffoon, Isabella the Catholic a spiritualist, and a promoter of bogus exploration and extermination companies, one or two of which had by fluke "struck oil"; Columbus being her agent. The Spanish Inquisition was no more than the County Council of its time; the Reformers, anarchists and agnostics. He laughed with glee as he read, and laughed still more in derision at the foreshadowed anguish of the castigated public. He wished he believed in the immortality of his soul or in his astral body, that he might expect to see those squirmings and listen to those groans. He wished so much that he began to consider. He had two half-crowns left. How long could a man live on two half-crowns? How long would it be until the lash might curl and smart round the shoulders of the public? Ah! impossible. He must content himself with the joy of anticipation; with chewing the cud of revengeful hope, say, until to-morrow morning. It was a pleasure he could afford, and need not be cut so hastily short.

He could not stay indoors. He suddenly wearied of dipping into the type-written pages; even of seeing as in double columns their avenging paragraphs. He craved for more food for his rage. He walked swiftly through the streets crowded by his silly little victims, the public, playing artlessly in the executioner's very path, all unconscious of their doom. At Piccadilly Circus he met a man he knew, a dabbler in literature, who made little fortunes at will by shocking society.

"You are 'le bien-venu,' Higgins," he cried. "I have an Antipodean uncle to feed and keep good for a few hours. Jervis swore to stand by me and see me through, but he has failed—wife ill. Dine with us in his place, there's a good boy, and come on after to the Empire. I have a box."

Higgins was weak with hunger, and did not refuse. He would like to have one more peep at this foolish world, before he quitted it for some higher plane. He dined well and not unwisely, and enjoyed the entertainment after with quite a new zest; as if it had been his first experience. After all, the uniqueness of a last entertainment should be as titillating to the palate as that of a first. Next morning he looked more tolerantly at life. With the assistance of tobacco—the last of his stock—his good dinner of last night would keep him going another day. He smoked until evening, amusing himself by dipping again into the old MS., reading with bursts of loud laughter those parallel columns in invisible ink.

At six o'clock came a telegram. He was tolerant enough of life to wonder resignedly if it might be an invitation to supply the place of another defaulting dinner-guest.

It was an urgent request to meet at once, at his private address, the publisher to whom he had taken his second MS. only yesterday.

A gratified smile illumined his visage. The publisher lived quite near, in Bedford Square. Higgins repaired thither at once. As there was no prospect of dinner, he had not much time left on his hands.

The arbiter of fate was a German Jew. He received the author of that biting

satire with hauteur; hiding his anguish heroically as, after twenty centuries of it, his race has learned to do.

"This little thing of yours—I brought it home yesterday by the merest accident," he explained. "I had toothache this morning, and was a prisoner here, so I read it. It is smart in its way; not scholarly, you know, or polished, or very original, but it may hit home here and there. I might sell an edition off cheap, though most likely it will moulder away in my cellars. I suppose nobody else has seen it? No? Will you take twenty pounds for it outright? I will give you the cheque now."

He could live, with care, for ten weeks upon twenty pounds. He knew the man wouldn't have touched it had it been worth less than five hundred, but he only cared to live long enough to see it in print and the lash round the writhing shoulders of the public. He accepted.

The publisher, who ran a racy review, said in a casual sort of way, as Higgins was departing:

"By the way, if you like to turn off a little thing of the same kind—four to seven thousand words—I might find room for it in the 'Crucible'; something to catch the public fancy. Tell them Gladstone wrote 'Hedda Gabler,' for instance, and let me have it to-morrow night. I go to press on Thursday."

So he must renounce with a sharp pang his scheme of vengeance. The public was too thick-headed to understand, too thick-skinned to feel. Well, he must fill up somehow the ten weeks of waiting, and amuse his unexpected leisure. Why not scratch off such an article? What were morality, art, possibility, common sense? What was left to him but private enjoyment of his scorn? Why should he not amuse himself thus easily by tickling the public ear, ever greedy for new sensations?

He wrote a score of such articles, brighter and more vigorous than they were daring or original. He wrote them under many pseudonyms, and in many styles, varying between grave philosophical discussion and cynical flippancy.

He proved that Bacon wrote the Casket Letters and Pope those of Junius. He ventured nearer home, and brought the Vatican pamphlets, ascribed to Gladstone, home to Cardinal Manning, and he discovered in Sir William Harcourt the author of "Lothair."

He proved Joan of Arc, Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, and Oliver Cromwell to have been sun-myths; and "Number One" of the Irish Secret Societies to be the same legendary phantasm which appeared from time to time here, there, and everywhere, as Noah, Sardanapalus, Aspasia, St. Dunstan, Tamerlane, Mahomet, Will Somers, Swift, Napoleon, and "Iota."

He tore to tatters all so-called historic sayings. It was Achilles, at the Siege of Troy, who cried, "Up, Guards, and at 'em." Wellington could not possibly have given such a command at Waterloo, being at that date engaged in playing at Bible acrostics with Miss J. at the Kremlin. "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," was the cry of admiration with which the Trojans received the colossal wooden horse. Under another pseudonym he proved that there never was a Troy, and that the younger Pliny wrote Homer.

It was the first two squatters who struck oil in America who bade each other "play the man, and they would light between them such a candle as should never be put out." Bishop Latimer could not have been present in any capacity at Ridley's burning, being just then engaged superintending the laying down of electric light in his episcopal palace. As for the use of electricity in Mary Tudor's time, did not many discoveries go out of fashion into oblivion? Was lightning not always at hand? and was there not an immense demand in those days for supply of all manner of fireworks? and did not demand—he knew too well now—create supply?

No European officer said: "Gentlemen of the Guard, fire first." The sentence occurs in the early literature of the Incas, and would be better translated: "You do the fighting, and I'll keep behind your back." Nor was it declared: "The Guard dies, but does not surrender." This was a snobbish attempt at improving upon the motto of an Assyrian cohort: "The ——th doesn't dance."

Charles the First did not say, "Remember." He had completely lost his voice, crossing the Park from St. James's Palace on a January morning in the two perfectly authentic shirts exhibited within recent years at the New Gallery. Abbé Edgeworth did not bid the "Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven." He merely raised his arm high to shake the King's hand in farewell, according to the Court fashion lately revived. The significance of the gesture was, of course, a hidden thing from the canaille who reported on it.

James the First of Scotland made a ferocious threat, not a patriotic resolution, when he said "he would make the key keep the castle, and the bracken-bush keep the cow." He was determined upon reducing his nobles to a diet of cold iron, as he would turn their cattle to find fodder in the bracken. He added, though the saying has been ascribed to a less illustrious speaker, that "it would be awkward for the coo." He professed no such sympathy, in Scotch or English, for the lord of the castle.

Henri of Navarre's promise of the "poule au pot" to his lieges has been perverted by his admirers far out of its meaning. It was a threat to boil them like fowls if they continued contumacious; a favourite Oriental method of enforcing the Royal pleasure, borrowed also by the Emperor Nero for the benefit of Saint John. Louis the Fifteenth did not say, "After me the deluge." The expression occurs in an early legend of that pure sun-and-rain myth, Saint Swithin.

Galileo did not say "e pur si muove," with reference to the earth's rotation round the sun. He gave vent to the exclamation falling upon a landing-stage, after being compelled by the Inquisition to go down the river on a penny steamer and consume refreshments sold on board. Luther was not the author of "Ich kann nicht anders." It was the remark with which Roger Ascham prefaced his customary canings of Lady Jane Grey, when she was backward with German irregular verbs. Charles the Second neither apologised for being such an unconscionable long time a-dying, nor charged his brother not to let poor Nelly starve. Being a Stuart, and therefore a tyrant worse than Lobengula, the longer he kept his courtiers on their legs about him, and the more who were killed by lingering tortures to honour the catastrophe of his death, the better he would be pleased.

George the Second never said to his dying wife, "J'aurai des maîtresses." George the Third did not habitually cry, "What? What? What?" for he always conversed in Norman French. George the Fourth did not command, "Bring me a glass of brandy, Harris," for recently found records prove him to have been a strict teetotaller all his days.

Newton truly exclaimed, "Diamond, Diamond, you little know what mischief you have done," but he never kept a dog, living in terror of hydrophobia. He of course apostrophised Sirius, the bright dog-star, whom he superstitiously believed to be responsible for a piece of bad luck, namely, an apple falling upon his head which knocked his new wig into the mire. Nelson never signalled to the fleet, "England expects every man this day to do his duty." The signal was in a cipher intelligible only to Lady Hamilton, who was watching the action from a private caravel, and was, being interpreted: "Chops and tomato sauce, and don't forget the warming-pan."

Browning, not Talleyrand, said that language was given to conceal thought. Goethe did not cry, "Licht, mehr licht." The plaint came anonymously from a West End Square, one foggy winter's night.

The Grand Old Man was a personification by Aristophanes of the Singing Memnon. Mr. W. H. Smith did not declare he stood by his duty to his Queen and country; they were Cardinal Wolsey's last words at Leicester Abbey. It was George Washington who told George the Third that the American Colonies would be "un joli souvenir." It was Dick Turpin at York who said, "J'y suis, j'y reste." And Beaconsfield could not have brought us peace with honour, because "there never was no sich a person." He was a sun-myth, too.

So Arthur Higgins made money and a name; several names. His new book came out, and then he made another and still bigger name. Fortune was secured to him, and the public waited only until he should disclose his identity, to fling itself at his feet. All the world wondered who the brilliant new historian might be, who had opened out such daring paths through the maze of history. The cap of honour was fitted first upon this eminent personage, then on that. Every member of the Government and front Opposition bench; every littérateur of English tongue, old fogey and youngest poet or humorist; every foreign statesman of notoriety; every member of the French Academy in turn; was softly impeached on the count of one or other of those articles or of that book. Then a sudden little rumour sprang up like an evening breeze out of some club corner. It was said that one man wrote all, book and articles. Instantly arose the inevitable whirlwind of loud contradictions, which as suddenly subsiding exhausted, revealed the theory, distinct, immutable, and substantial, an accepted fact.

A moment, and discussion raged around once more. Who was the man? Gladstone? Balfour? X? Zola? Vandam?

How it oozed out nobody knew, but one day common report proclaimed the man to be Arthur Higgins. The evening papers were full of the discovery; the dailies took up the hymn of exultation and praise. The magazines and reviews followed when they could, each with its homage to the author and his golden future. He acknowledged his work with a pang. It was renouncing for ever his credit as a serious historian. But one must live. Praise is sweet, and money is useful. What if he had gained it by a trick, by paltering with truth? Tricks pay, and truth did not. So Arthur Higgins sold his soul to the devil.

A Minister looking round for a brilliant young man to fill an important post, took a fancy to one of the more daring articles, and hearing Higgins was the author, decided to offer the post to him. Higgins heard of his coming fortune, and was wild with pride and joy. He anxiously awaited the post, or the special messenger bringing the appointment. The sound of the knocker set his heart leaping almost out of his breast.

It was only an editor's letter with a request for another article in his second manner. The public was impatient for one. Kept waiting too long for advertisement of his existence, it would presently forget him altogether. There was a liberal cheque enclosed.

Forget him! Impossible—and yet—it is a hurrying and thankless world. There is many a slip between the rumour of an appointment and the lip of realisation. He would astonish the public once more. He laughed louder than ever at the idea which for the moment seemed quite new.

He wrote the most clinching article he had turned out yet. Was it possible a simple people could err so wide of the mark as to accredit the obscure Arthur Higgins with the authorship of the mysterious works? He proved beyond all possibility of doubt that they were all written by two self-taught journalists: William Brown, of York, and Thomas Smith, of Exeter.

The article appeared in the leading evening paper, "The Hyde Park Gazette." It was copied into the dailies and the country papers. Country correspondents wrote to authenticate the statement. There was a William Brown at York, and a Thomas Smith at Exeter.

The Minister read it in the extra special edition of "The Hyde Park Gazette," though it was not an organ of his party. Fortunately he had not yet acted upon the impulse which suggested the obscure Arthur Higgins for the vacant post in his gift. An hour later he appointed his nephew's brother-in-law.

A few days later Arthur Higgins sent a batch of articles to the papers whose circulation he had multiplied by ten. Perhaps they were not written with his old verve. Perhaps his disappointment had made him go flat. Perhaps the line was played out. The editors were unable to find room for his contributions, owing to the pressure of important matter upon their space.

Another evening, and a short paragraph sold them like wildfire once more. Arthur Higgins, of Balliol, the brilliant historian, critic, new humorist, had blown out his brains.

It was quite expected for nine days that he would write an article, scoffing at the credulity of the public who ascribed to him the deed of some other man, of the Prime Minister, or the author of "Dodo," or of Mr. Henry Irving. But the rest of his series of negations was silence.

DAVID CROWHURST'S ORDEAL.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV. A DESOLATE HOME.

All this time Elsie went from day to day in a kind of agony, feeling as each morning dawned that she could not bear to see another, yet holding on tenaciously to existence. All day long she was following her husband through every sort of painful scene; when she lay awake at night her imagination still depicted painful images. At this time of terrible uncertainty there was always a kind of desperate hope that at any moment intelligence might be received; or it might even be possible that he who formed the subject of all her thoughts might suddenly return.

Elsie's own words lent colour to the suspicion against her cousin. In the matter of her uncle's legacy she now blamed herself passionately, and her frantic expressions verged upon exaggeration. She was subjected to endless ingenuities of cross-examination by inquisitive investigators, feeling that her most secret fancies were being extorted from her and forced to bear an interpretation which they were never intended to have; but she was naturally candid, and deeply imbued with a conviction that frankness was a sacred obligation.

In those dark days her cousin was the best staff upon which Mrs. Raeburn had to lean. His courageous spirit met every emergency. He was equal to rapid conclusion and calculation, encountering with a dauntless front every kind of trivial necessity, side by side with considerations worthy of the solemnity of the occasion. He could subdue his own soul, forcing it into silence, for he had resolved to be true as heaven to the desolate woman and her children; but many an hour his heart was like to break with the acute and aching sympathy which bears its full share of the sorrow which it finds itself unable to relieve. The thought which troubled him most was that, as suspicion had touched him, so it might alight on Elsie. Even the idea drove the good fellow frantic. Any chance doubt might express a deadly misgiving; a thoughtless word might mean an accusation; careless shafts aimed at random but wounding like fiery arrows—against such blows as these he had no power to protect her. Between the hot and fiery impulse to defy the world, and the sorrowful, tender patience which counselled endurance, his strength of mind sometimes forsook him.

Autumn's early glories came and went. The maples flamed; oak and ash were burnished in bronze and crimson; the sumachs burst into glowing fires, filling all the landscape with deep, strong radiance. The wind drifted all the waysides and wood-paths with a downpour of colour, and through the thinning boughs one caught glimpses of distant splendours among the hills.

David Crowhurst walked with bent head and lagging footsteps. His temper was too sweet and patient to become morose, but a cloud of heaviness and discouragement darkened his soul. As he approached Ingleside he paused, looking around reflectively. It must be close to this very spot that Raeburn had been last seen. Oh, if there were any force that could wrest the secret from earth and sky, these silent witnesses which deepest anguish had no power to move! It was a horrible thing that human life should be blackened by endless despair, and that no remedy for it should exist. Even in his trouble an element of hope presented itself to David's patient and trustful spirit. The two elder children were playing in the lane and rushed to meet him; active, lively little figures, flushed and joyous, breathing warmth and commotion, their merry childish voices ringing out unconcernedly, forgetting, or altogether unaware of the loss they had sustained.

When he entered the sitting-room, it seemed so still that at first he believed that the room was empty. Elsie had fallen into her chair as though exhausted; her head was bowed on her clasped hands, every fold of her black gown, every line of the listless, drooping form was expressive of despairing misery. She did not stir as the door opened. Crowhurst stood looking down at her, his rugged face glorified by an infinite tenderness, a pure affection absolutely untinged by egotism. As he stood silent, she roused herself. The sight of him brought a thrill to her thoughts, an eager light to her eyes; he might possibly prove the bearer of news.

"Oh, David," she said, "I must have fallen asleep. At night, the hours pass, and I cannot close my eyes."

She partly rose, but faltered, sinking back in her weakness, with hands tightly clasped, and thin white fingers quivering.

"I hate to sleep; I am haunted by such terrible dreams. I always see Reuben dead, or dying, or perhaps enduring some terrible form of suffering. Sometimes I think he may be lying stiff and cold, close beside us. It seems so cruel that his own wife and children should be able to rest until they find him. Then, when I lie awake, I listen to every sound, for tidings might come at any moment. If Reuben needs me, I must hold myself in readiness, I could not fail him."

David sighed heavily, but he remained silent. He had no comfort to administer, and the poor fellow smarted under a sense of his own incapacity. Of what use was his strength or his money when they were unable to avert one pang, or gain a moment's peace? It was horrible to him to witness such misery; it was like desecration, a brutal intrusion into the holy of holies, yet he was the only one upon whom she had any real claim, upon whom she could depend for brotherly care or guidance. He had meant to tell her that popular suspicion had pointed to him as Raeburn's murderer; partly because he thought it right that she should understand all the circumstances of the case; partly influenced by an eager, instinctive clutching at human comprehension and sympathy. Now, the natural chivalry of the man protested. He instantly abandoned the intention. He must bear his own burden, and as large a share of hers as she would allow him to

assume. What did it matter? Amid such a culmination of miseries a little more or less made no difference.

"Your little ones," he said unsteadily. "You must think of them; for their sake you must be brave."

"Oh! the children; if it were not for them I could not live at all." Two hot tears, that scorched like fire, gathered in her eyes, and fell heavily on her black dress. "David, they keep hinting that I was a bad wife to him, asking if we quarrelled; oh! it is cruel, cruel. If he had died with us, and I could have held his hand, and closed his eyes, kissing him as he lay in his coffin; if I could have gone to see his grave, I feel that I could have endured God's will, but it is the uncertainty that is insupportable. David, this watching and waiting is like being burnt in a fire, consumed slowly, inch by inch."

Her voice had a shrill anguish which was intolerable to the listener; he flung up his hand into the air with a gesture which was altogether involuntary, as he uttered a smothered groan of pain. Elsie was revolving in her mind many bitter thoughts.

"I do not know what I am saying or doing; this is more than I can bear. Perhaps I have never been very good, but I am not worse than others. I could count them all up to you—the women who are my age, and who were married when I was. Nothing terrible has happened to them. They are at peace, and I am wretched. What have I done that God's hand should be laid so heavily upon me—that I should be tortured? David, you are wise and good, why don't you answer me?"

"Elsie," implored Crowhurst, holding out his hands to her with a sort of dumb supplication to her not to say any more. These were the thoughts which he had himself repulsed as a temptation; hearing them clothed with words wounded him past endurance. Elsie's suffering had assumed the form of a momentary madness; she was driven beyond the bounds of her sensitive and impressionable temperament. David was surprised and perplexed. He comprehended but dimly this frenzy of outraged nature, due to physical as much as mental causes. This was not a reasonable, controlled soul like his own, but the less steadfast spirit of an excitable, wayward, and distracted woman. As her mind regained its balance, and Elsie heard the voice of bewildered exhortation and consolation sounding in her ears, she knew that her cousin could no more follow her in the impulsive outcry of her passion than if he had been a stranger. The paroxysm left her prostrate, like a creature incapable of thought.

"I can't bear any more," she said, in a low, slow voice.

David watched her anxiously. What could he do for this stricken creature, with the marks of heavy grief and misfortune upon her, and with a future before her in which Heaven alone knew how many misfortunes might be coming? Then he went home, very sad, weary, and doubtful.

As the hours ebbed away into days, and the days lengthened into months, the dramatic stir and commotion occasioned by Reuben Raeburn's disappearance gradually subsided. It remained, and for many a long year would continue to exist in the country, as a tale of wonder. It became an accepted fact, to all except his wife, that Raeburn had passed from the land of the living. Unfortunately, to Mrs. Raeburn existence continued a fever of expectation and anticipation which shattered her faculties, mental and physical. Those about her could see her wearing into angles, and daily watch the growing lines of pain and thought. Some were sufficiently unprincipled to trade upon her incredulity; and however wild and extravagant might be the proposed expedients upon which she set her heart, her cousin could not bear to thwart her wayward fancies. Enterprising investigators were continually finding clues to the missing man's whereabouts; stories of persons exactly answering to Raeburn's description came from many distant regions; but when time, money, and ingenuity had been spent upon the search, it invariably ended in nothing, leaving Elsie a prey to the terrible disappointment which is born of suffering. She lost all power of concentrating her thoughts upon practical needs and prosaic necessities, dwelling upon this one absorbing theme until the strain upon her senses resulted in a sort of prepossession, which, intensified by physical weakness and the solitude of her life, amounted to actual mania. Her home duties, the care of her property, even her children, lost interest, and came to be regarded as distasteful distractions. Had it not been for David Crowhurst's fostering care, Ingleside would speedily have drifted to total rack and ruin. At first, David proposed that the farm should be let, and that his cousin and her children should make their home with him; this plan, he thought, would afford mutual accommodation, as it would

be impossible for Mrs. Raeburn to work Ingleside alone, and at that time he needed a housekeeper. No man could be more tender to the memory of the lost than David, as no man could be more tolerant and forbearing with the living, and he tried to look at the project on every side with the impartial daylight of unselfish observation before speaking of it. But Elsie indignantly rejected the plan; she was quite determined that in the spot from whence her husband had disappeared she should remain until some trace of him, dead or alive, were found.

Finding her impervious to reason, David yielded the point. If a passing spasm contracted his heart, a thrill of longing, a pang of self-restraint, he bore it quietly, not being used to considering himself. Elsie could not put aside her own wild fancies, nor could David enter into or comprehend them, so there was a separation between them which had nothing to do with external obstacles, while love itself stood baffled and discouraged by the discovery. Elsie always retained an idea that her cousin had refused to enter into her special sorrow. It was only when she found that her resources were becoming crippled from the large sums which she had continually been expending upon that hopeless and endless quest, and perceived that if something were not done to supply the deficiency the search must be abandoned, that she would consent to let Ingleside, though she insisted upon retaining the house for her own use.

Reuben Raeburn's loss produced almost as deep an effect upon David Crowhurst's character as it had effected upon that of the desolate wife. He never became bitter or morose, but he lost heart; the simple pleasures which he had once enjoyed lost all attraction for him. Not even the weight of troublous care that oppressed him could make an infidel of the loyal heart which had no understanding of falsehood or distrust; for the candid soul could not deny its own nature, nor abjure the strong belief in God, the confidence in faith and truth, which lay at the bottom of his creed. Still, in his relations with his neighbours these events affected him painfully. He could not endure cold civility and averted glances where he had once enjoyed a pleasant popularity and supremacy. Had it not been for the need this lonely woman and her fatherless little ones had of him, he would have left his home, and fled away from the suspicion and animosity which poisoned the very springs of his life. As it was, he turned his back on the outside world and retired, as it were, within himself. From the depths of his honest heart he despised the faint trust which had perished at the first breath of suspicion.

His was not the sort of nature which is rendered unfit for work even by the heaviest calamities of life. He said very little, but went quietly about his work, asking and receiving sympathy from no man. A reserved, depressed man, he was only saved from complete isolation by affection for the absorbed woman who had no thought to spare for his limitless, tender devotion, and the little children to whom he represented whatever there was of fondness and protective care in the world. There was a certain consolation in the thought that they belonged to him alone, and had nothing to look for except the cherishing support which he was anxious to give them.

There were three little girls—gentle, sensitive, pretty creatures, upon whose childhood the dark mystery of pain and loss had early cast its shadow. During her paroxysms of restless activity, or in the long intervals of dejected apathy with which they alternated, their mother paid little attention to those budding lives. In her absorption the ordinary ties seemed to have dropped away from her; she fancied that her children were too young to understand her; and even as they grew older persuaded herself that they had their own fresh young lives to occupy them, and were not to be diverted from their own interests by her troubles. The girls in their childish minds connected their mother with a vague sense of disturbance and desolation, but they readily grasped the fact that to Uncle David they were the most interesting creatures in the world. He delighted in their company, never wearied of providing simple pleasures for them, and shared their childish thoughts and innocent desires to his own infinite advantage as well as to theirs. All the sweetness of his existence proceeded from their affection. To the lonely, simple-hearted man, these little maids seemed as angels sent to minister to him in the wilderness, and he accepted the alleviation as coming direct from Heaven with the most humble gratitude and reverence.

CHAPTER V. THE WRAITH.

One summer's evening, David Crowhurst was walking slowly up to Ingleside. The sunset was lighting up all the horizon.

Overhead the sky ascended in varying tints of daffodil and faint ethereal greenness up to the bright summer blue. The pines on the hillside stood up against it like rigid black shadows cut out against the yellow radiance which was belted with flaming lines of crimson. Long gleams caught the golden rods on the common, turning every blossom into richest gold. There were to be seen myriad marvellous contrasts in pure white, wild rose, shell-tinted purple, emphasizing every shade of grey-green grass fluttering in the evening breeze—the whole producing an iridescent, shimmering effect of lilac bloom, while whitish-grey buds and waving branches all danced crisply together in the evening air.

The three little girls were on the watch for their welcome visitor, and with joyous shouts rushed to greet him. Maggie, the youngest, a demure little damsel of six, was seated triumphantly on his shoulder; Jean and Jessie clung to him on either side. It was a sort of triumphant procession. The little clinging hands and pleading childish voices were full of sweetest comfort to David; these fair children clinging about his knees belonged to him as though they had been his own.

Suddenly he saw a woman making her way rapidly through the fields. It was Mrs. McBean. She had herself been a servant at Ingleside, and had married Reuben Raeburn's head man and factotum, a sober, steady man who had saved money; at present they rented the farm from Mrs. Raeburn, and lived in a frame house some short distance down the road. Something unusual had certainly occurred to distress the staid and discreet Scotchwoman; her face was very pale, her breath came hurriedly. Crowhurst, always considerate for others, stood still, placed the child on the ground, and called out:

"Is anything wrong, Mrs. McBean?"

As the woman emerged on to the road, she sank down on to the grass, saying breathlessly:

"Send the children away."

"Now, my pretties, run home. Uncle David will find something in his pockets for the one who gets there quickest."

"But we want you too, Uncle David," in a chorus.

"Yes, I shall be there right away. Now, run."

Crowhurst stood looking with grave concern at the woman's white face until she recovered herself, and spoke.

"I have had a terrible fright," looking over her shoulder with a startled glance and a shiver. "I saw a wraith."

"A wraith!" he repeated in astonishment.

"Yes—a spirit—a ghost. Oh! here you laugh at such things, but many a strange thing I remember to have heard at home in the old country. Mr. Crowhurst," bending forward, and speaking in an awed whisper, "Reuben Raeburn's wraith appeared to me; I saw it as plainly as I see you."

"Reuben Raeburn! You must have fancied it."

"Why should I? I was not thinking about him. I was crossing the pine-grove up above the pasture, when I saw some one moving among the trees away to the left. I thought it was Sandy, so I hurried to catch up to him, then I called out as loud as I could. He turned his head and looked at me; it was Reuben Raeburn."

"Then what became of him? Some chance resemblance deceived you, or you fancied it."

"Well, I am not much given to fancyings."

Crowhurst knew Mrs. McBean to be a practical and clear-headed woman, as little likely to be subject to nervous or hysterical terrors as any one in the world. He could only conclude that she had been deceived by a resemblance in some passing stranger. If, however, such a report should reach Elsie's ears, he trembled for the consequences.

"Mrs. McBean," he pleaded earnestly, "you would not willingly harm that poor woman who has suffered so much already."

"Is it Mrs. Raeburn? Why, Mr. Crowhurst, I never felt so sorry for any one as for her. As for all the talk"—David winced—"I never paid any heed to it, I knew her far too well."

"A whisper of this would be sufficient to drive her wild. She has been so sorely tried that sometimes I fear her reason will not stand the strain."

"She has nothing to fear from me. You want me to promise not to speak about what I have seen," Mrs. McBean observed shrewdly. "I'll give you my word ready enough. I don't want to set myself up for a laughing-stock for all the world. Now I'll go home, for I'm shaking all over."

The circumstance made a very unpleasant impression on David's mind; but, as time passed and he heard nothing more of it, the remembrance gradually sank into oblivion.

About sixteen years after Reuben Rae-

burn's strange disappearance, odd rumours began to circulate in the vicinity of Streatfield. It was whispered that the spirit of the man who had vanished so mysteriously was haunting the fields and hillsides, lingering amidst the scenes which had once been so familiar. Most of these stories emanated from Tim Bailey's cobbler's shop, where the little man's cronies were fond of collecting to discuss an extensive variety of subjects. In this part of the country many of the settlers were Scotch people who had brought their inherited superstitions to the new world; their untrained imaginations readily imbibed anything bordering on the marvellous.

"The poor fellow cannot rest in his grave," insisted Tim, whom the years had rendered thinner, drier, and more shrivelled than ever.

"If he has a grave. Who can tell where the poor body may be lying, wanting Christian burial?"

"Or craving revenge on them that did the ill deed."

The wraith had appeared to Tim. The cobbler was endowed with a warm imagination, with a fine instinct for dramatic details and embellishments, so the history of his encounter with the spirit finally became so terrifying, that Tim, who was a solitary bachelor, was obliged to hire one of his young nephews to sleep at his house to secure him from the dread of ghostly visitants.

After that, many to whom Raeburn had been well known professed to have seen the lost man. Tim resented these pretensions as an unjust infringement of his own prerogatives, and professed to doubt any ghostly adventures except his own. Among the reasonable persons of the community who professed entire disbelief in these thrilling tales, was James Guthrie.

"The fools are not all dead yet, and Tim Bailey is the biggest of them all," he insisted contemptuously.

"But you should hear him tell about it, Guthrie, it fairly makes your flesh creep," urged a neighbour who had been greatly excited by the novel sensation, and now, beneath the withering blast of Guthrie's sarcasm, felt rather ashamed of his own credulity.

"I don't want my flesh to creep; it suits me better the way God made it. As for Tim, I should like to wring his neck for setting these stories afloat."

It happened one day, as Guthrie was driving home, that he was overtaken by Tim Bailey. When excited by the applause of an admiring audience, the little man professed great gallantry, but when he had found himself trudging the solitary road alone, his heroic qualities promptly evaporated. He gladly accepted his old friend's offer of a lift, then, feeling his spirits braced by society, rapidly grew chatty and hilarious.

"What's this I hear about you turning ghost-seer, Tim?" Guthrie asked severely.

"I always thought I could see farther than most people. There's them that's gifted. I don't pretend to think," with deprecating modesty, "that it's any particular good quality of mine, it's just——"

"Particular foolishness. You'll lose your head entirely, man, the little there is of it, if you take up with idle clavers in that fashion. It's clean gone daft you are."

The cobbler felt these strong expressions as deeply injurious. When a man aspires to pose as a hero, it is rather disconcerting to have his brilliant exploits regarded with contempt. Tim's volatile nature instantly veered from his own standpoint to that of his companion. Everybody acknowledged that Guthrie was a particularly sensible man; many reasonable people certainly regard weird and uncanny visitants from the other world with scornful derision.

"But what a man sees with his own eyes," he pleaded piteously.

"But you know, Tim, it would not be the first time you have seen double," jeered Guthrie.

Tim was humbly willing to own his weakness, but could not bear to be bereft of his delusion.

"If you were to see something right in front of you, you would feel very different, Mr. Guthrie."

"Possibly I should enquire if it were a trick, and try to find out the reason of it."

They had reached a spot where the road took a sharp turn; on either side the trees grew thickly on a high ridge, while the highway ran below at a much lower level. Suddenly, Tim's mouth and eyes opened to their fullest extent.

"Mr. Guthrie, what do you call that?" he inquired in a shrill whisper.

Guthrie quickly turned his head. Through the trees, on the ground above them, a man was moving rapidly; something in the gait and figure caused the spectator's heart to throb with a strange excitement; and he stopped the horse. As the stranger turned, Tim gave vent to a shrill yell which aroused the mountain echoes. Guthrie sat still, as though turned to stone by the shock, for

the face he looked upon was that of Reuben Raeburn. The sturdy Scotchman was no coward; in an instant he recovered himself and collected his shattered energies.

"Man or devil, I'll find out what that is," he declared resolutely. "Here, Tim, hold the horse."

"I can't," whimpered Tim, "I'm quaking all over; just look at my hands. It's terrible unlucky to meddle with them things. Let us get away as quick as ever we can."

His adjurations were addressed to unheeding ears. Guthrie was already climbing the steep bank as fast as his unwieldy bulk would allow him to move, but when he reached the top no living creature was to be seen. Vainly he searched in every direction which his ingenuity could suggest, while Tim vainly quavered entreaties and exhortations from the buggy. It seemed as though this strange intruder in these sylvan solitudes had vanished as abruptly as Reuben Raeburn himself had done. After a time, Guthrie returned wearily to his vehicle.

"It's downright absurd," he exclaimed irritably. "There certainly was a man just within my grasp, as it were, and now I can't find a trace of him. How do you account for that? If I could only lay hands on him, I'd make him give an account of himself."

"Don't be too venturesome, Mr. Guthrie, it brings ill-luck."

"I don't care what it brings if I could only get to the bottom of this. There is some trick, of that I'm convinced. Now, I'll go straight to his wife; this is a thing she ought to know."

"Oh! don't, Mr. Guthrie. She is just like a wraith herself, so thin and reedy; her big wild eyes always make me feel creepy."

"I'll go straight there," reiterated Guthrie, all the more stoutly because he was conscious of some faintness of heart on his own account. Though they were near neighbours, it was years since he had held any intercourse with his old friend's wife. "If you had not been such a fool as to shout, I could easily have reached that fellow."

"I did it on purpose to prevent you from touching him, it's not every man would have such presence of mind; it's terrible ill-luck to touch a wraith," rejoined Tim triumphantly.

They found Mrs. Raeburn sitting on the piazza of her own house, rocking herself to and fro in an aimless, desultory sort of fashion. She was neither pleased nor annoyed by the intrusion, regarding the two awkward, shrinking men with the most complete indifference. Her eyes never lost their dreamy abstraction; she apparently made no effort to comprehend their words.

"Lord help us, the poor soul has lost her wits," muttered Guthrie.

When, however, she caught the sound of her husband's name, the dull, lethargic indifference yielded place to keen interest. Until then their words had awakened a sensation far too faint to be called curiosity, much less fear. What they said seemed to be intended for a stupid kind of pleasantry. After all that had happened, what did it matter what any one said? Once her interest was aroused she listened attentively, questioned eagerly as her rapid mind took a swift survey of the subject. Mrs. Raeburn felt as if she had been suddenly seized upon and dragged out of a sorrowful dream into the noise of life. She had awakened up with a painful surprise, but all her faculties were quickened and made vivid by the new sensation. She was so quiet and composed that Guthrie had not considered a great deal of preface necessary in introducing the subject. Her calmness was not so firmly established as to be able to maintain itself before this revival of old associations, but even her breaking down was restrained, and did not frighten the spectators. The peculiarity of her agitation was that though she struggled with it visibly, she never abdicated her painful sway and authority over herself.

"I knew he would return," she concluded composedly. "This is what I have been waiting for all these years."

The two men stared at each other in astonishment; they could not grasp the faintest idea of her meaning.

"Come away," whispered Tim; "it makes my blood run cold to look at her."

"I don't know if she understands at all," returned his friend; "anyhow, there does not seem to be anything else we can do."

After that, David noticed that his cousin was possessed by a new freak. She wandered about continually through the fields, down by the river, about the highway; not moving aimlessly, but with a look of steady purpose underlying her assumed indifference, an eager, intent interest in every gesture and movement. She seemed actually to grudge every moment devoted to either food or sleep.

One evening as he was approaching Ingleside, he met her walking slowly towards him. As he watched her, he

noticed that there was a sort of reposeful restfulness about her such as he had not seen for years, and which recalled the fair, gentle girl who had been the love of his youth. Catching up to her, he drew her arm within his own.

"You are tired, Elsie," he said anxiously.

She looked up at him, and he was startled by the subtle change in her countenance. Her lips were parted with a quick breath of emotion; out of their sad depths of silence her eyes gave a wistful, enquiring glance at her cousin. In that moment her face had grown radiant in the pathos and inspiration of joy.

"Yes, very tired; but then it matters so little. Reuben has come for me."

"Come for you!" he repeated in consternation.

"Yes, I saw him. I know very well what the sight meant. David, I shall be so glad to rest."

Later she proposed that she and the girls should move over to Crowhurst's place.

"You will like to have us, David, and it will be a comfort to know that the children are safe with you. I should like to look out on the spots where we played together when we were children, and where Uncle Adam, and you, and I, were so happy together; it seems as though I could rest better there."

Nothing could remove that delusion from Mrs. Raeburn's mind. She had seen her husband, he had come for her, now she was going to him. The old restless pain gave place to a sweet, pathetic patience, as through the winter she faded very peacefully and painlessly. She returned to her natural self, as it were, and was again tenderly devoted to her children, and very grateful and affectionate to David. Peace fought with the restless impatience on her wan face, and finally overcame it, gleaming like wintry sunshine from the edges of the overwhelming shadow.

"I have borne my trial badly, David," she said once. "I ceased to trust God. I am sorry. He is merciful, and will forgive."

Mrs. Raeburn accepted this termination of her troubles as though it were the most natural thing in the world. There was no longer anything to desire. There was no strong sentiment to war against her weakness; she yielded herself up to the affection which surrounded her with unquestioning confidence, resting in peaceful tranquillity. David bore it all, knowing that nothing else was possible save to comfort and solace her a little before she should pass beyond their reach.

In that bright chamber where the invalid lay, the household went and came; the sun shone cheerily in, the sweet breath of flowers and the fresh country air penetrated to it, making a specious, transparent pretence that life was still sweet, while the moments which no one could arrest swept on, the hours ended one by one, and God's will worked itself out. Then when spring was vivifying the land with beauty of flower and foliage; flooding it with sunshine and renewed life; they laid the worn and weary woman beside old Adam Crowhurst, in the little country churchyard among the hills.

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 313.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1894. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Valiant Ignorance," "A Mere Cypher," "Cross Currents," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"CONNIE, you can't wear the lace on your yellow dress again. I said so last time you had it on. What are you going to do about it?"

Mrs. Vallotson had brought her vigorous presence into the dining-room for the express purpose of asking the question, and she paused for the answer just inside the door. It was only half-past ten in the morning, but the July day was already very hot; and Constance, the only occupant of the room, was sitting by the table, with some needlework before her, in a rather listless attitude. It was an attitude—as it was an occupation—which the Constance of two years before would utterly have scouted; but the Constance of two years before seemed to have undergone considerable modification in the interval. The alert air of superiority had degenerated into an expression of supercilious dissatisfaction; the assured self-confidence into a resentful and enforced quiescence. Constance had entered the lists with her mother on the subject of the regeneration of Alnchester. She had come off conquered instead of conqueror, and the low opinion which she had consequently found herself obliged to form of her mother's intellect by no means militated against—or sweetened—her enforced realisation of her mother's strength of character. Defeat and enforced idleness are naturally trying to an individual who feels that the world is the worse for her inaction. Moreover, one may be clearly aware of the impossibility of regarding a certain friend in any other than a friendly light, and yet one may find life a trifle the duller for that friend's absence.

During the month which had preceded Bryan Armitage's departure from Alnchester, Constance had snubbed him, ignored him, and quarrelled with him; loftily consigning to oblivion the question and answer which had passed between them at that ball, on which so many results had ensued. But it was not to be denied, nevertheless, that since then Constance had grown a little thin and pale.

She took up her work as Mrs. Vallotson spoke, and shook her head indifferently.

If time had not dealt very kindly with Constance, it seemed to have laid a rather invigorating than depressing finger upon her mother. Mrs. Vallotson had risen from her illness of two years ago with some such change upon her as might have been apparent in a woman who had passed through an acute crisis, either physical or mental. It would have been difficult to say—such characteristics having always been so pronounced in her—that she was harder, more dominating, more assured; but her whole personality seemed to have become accentuated. She had aged, Alnchester said, perceptibly; but it was the age that ingrains and confirms, and in no sense the age that relaxes or enfeebles.

As she stood now, looking down at her daughter, the alteration in her personality, which thus made itself vaguely apparent in her general manner and demeanour, was just traceable in her face. Her hair had grown grey, and there were lines about her eyes. But the eyes themselves were keen, and even peremptory, in their commanding glance. There were lines about the mouth, but they in no wise interfered

with the unconscious air of material well-being which was the dominant expression of the whole countenance.

She scanned her daughter's languid figure, and then spoke decidedly.

"Come, rouse yourself, child," she said. "You must wear the dress this evening, and something must be done to it first."

"It's too hot for concerts," said the girl, with weary superciliousness.

She was engaged to go that evening to a concert with some friends in the town.

"It's not the most sensible way of spending a July evening," returned her mother. "I told you that when you accepted. But, as you have accepted, of course you must go. Black lace would look nice after all that white. That friend of Mrs. Elliott's had a very pretty dress trimmed with black lace."

"I don't like black lace, mother."

"Have you anything else to propose? No? Then I don't see that you've any alternative, and there's no time to lose. I'm going down into the town. Go and put on your hat, and I'll go with you to buy it. The walk will do you good."

Constance hesitated a moment, and then she rose listlessly. She had come to the conclusion that it was undignified to argue about trifles. It was a conclusion which was less acutely painful to her than a recognition of the fact that the weight of her mother's determination, even in trifles, was not to be resisted.

She made no attempt, however, to conclude her preparations for her walk with any despatch. She dawdled and dreamed until she found herself quite surprised at receiving no call, more or less peremptory. She went downstairs, and coming from the dining-room she met the housemaid, hurried and subdued. Constance pushed open the dining-room door and went in.

Mrs. Vallotson was still in her indoor dress. The second post had arrived, and beside her on the table lay an open letter. She turned abruptly as Constance entered.

"Oh, you're ready, child!" she said shortly. "That's all right. You'll have to do my commission for me. I shan't be able to come out."

"Why not, mother?"

"There's a letter from North. He is coming down this evening to stay until to-morrow."

The statement was as brief as possible, and it sounded even more curt than it was by reason of the sharp note which had appeared in Mrs. Vallotson's voice. A slight darkness and disturbance had fallen upon her face, and she moved across to the writing-table as Constance exclaimed:

"Coming down! How surprising! One would have thought that he had forgotten our very existence!"

The girl spoke rather tartly; she was in no mood to approve of any action on the part of any of her fellow-creatures; and her mother's statement contained for her the very casual and hurried fulfilment by North of a long-deferred duty. She paused a moment for a mental amplification of her unfavourable criticism of him, and then observing that her mother was making a list of her requirements, she said:

"But I don't see why North's coming should keep you at home this morning, mother. There's surely nothing to do but to tell Sarah to get the spare bedroom ready?"

"I must see that it is properly done," was the curt response. "The room will have to be thoroughly turned out. Make haste now, Connie. The things from the greengrocer's are wanted this morning."

The spare room, like every other corner in Mrs. Vallotson's house, was always in spotless order. Constance was quite convinced that a guest could have been ushered in on a very few moments' notice. But she was also quite convinced that, if her mother had decided to make a day's work of the preparation for North's arrival, expostulation was waste of time. She therefore departed on her errands; her listlessness somewhat dissipated by the stimulus which her critical faculty had received. Even her engagement for the evening had acquired an interest in her eyes. It was very well that North should understand that the whole household was not to be at his beck and call at a moment's notice.

The servants came to the conclusion, during the course of a morning's work severely superintended by their mistress, that Mrs. Vallotson was not "best pleased at Dr. Branston's coming down so unexpected"; and that that was the reason why she was making such a "turn out" about the preparations for his reception. And Dr. Vallotson, when the fact of North's prospective arrival was laid before him at luncheon, found himself rather perplexed as to his point of view with reference thereto.

Personally Dr. Vallotson was rather pleased than otherwise. His dislike for North had been an affair of habit, created originally he hardly knew how, fostered by their business relation. But now that the

young man was no longer a daily thorn in his flesh, Dr. Vallotson was vaguely aware that North was a successful man, and was by no means blind to that reflected light with which the connections of a successful man may shine. For his own part, therefore, he was ready to receive his visitor with cordiality, and to express satisfaction in the prospect of his arrival.

It was, however, an indirect testimony to the increase of power about Mrs. Vallotson, that her husband, while he grew increasingly pompous and self-satisfied in his relation with the world at large, seemed to grow correspondingly meeker in his relation with his wife. He was loth to commit himself, now, without a lead, and in the brief words in which the communication was made to him he looked for a lead in vain.

"Coming down for a night?" he said majestically, but with entirely non-committal emphasis. "Really? Dear me, it is a long time since we saw him!"

"Yes."

The response was monosyllabic, but since it was entirely destitute of expression it certainly contained no reprobation, and Dr. Vallotson took courage.

"You have been making preparations for his arrival, my dear?" he said. "It seems almost a pity that he cannot stay a little longer, doesn't it? He is a busy man, though; a busy man and a very successful man, too."

"So it seems."

It was the same dry, inexpressive tone, and Dr. Vallotson shook his head dubiously.

"Ah!" he observed sententiously. "He learned a great deal under me—a great deal more than he is aware of, I've no doubt. Well!" Dr. Vallotson's voice took a tolerant tone. "We shall be glad to see him. We shall be glad to see him."

Without answering her husband, Mrs. Vallotson turned abruptly to Constance.

"Connie," she said, "you must send a note to say that you won't be able to go to the concert to-night."

Constance started indignantly.

"Why not, mother?" she asked argumentatively. "Because of North? Really, I don't see why that should keep me at home! He should have given us longer notice."

"I can't help that!" returned her mother harshly. "As he is only to be here one night, of course you must be at home."

"But, mother, I don't want——"

Lunch was over, and Mrs. Vallotson rose.

"Don't argue, Constance!" she said. "I wish you to stop at home!"

She might be compelled to stop at home, or rather she might decline to contest the point; but, that North should quite understand her opinion of his sudden visit, the girl was all the more determined. She had not known, indeed, until she sat down to write the note which her mother dictated to her, how utterly she condemned the bad form of his proceedings. She established herself in her own room, determined to deny herself afternoon tea—in time for which function North was expected—and to appear only at dinner.

But Constance had reckoned without her host. At about a quarter past four the parlour-maid knocked at her door. Her mistress had sent her, she said, to ask when Miss Vallotson was coming down. Miss Vallotson had rather a headache, it appeared, and was not coming down. The servant departed, but she returned almost immediately. Her mistress said Miss Vallotson was to come down at once, please. Miss Vallotson hesitated for a moment, and then with her small pointed chin in the air she descended.

Mrs. Vallotson was sitting alone in the drawing-room. She did not even look up as the girl came in, taking her appearance, under the circumstances, as the merest matter of course. Constance crossed the room and sat down by the open window without a word. A quarter of an hour passed in unbroken silence. Then Mrs. Vallotson deliberately folded her work, and laid it on the table.

Constance had heard nothing; but the next instant the door opened, and Dr. Vallotson and North Branston came in together.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE evening was nearly over. North Branston was standing on the hearthrug, a transitory position into which an abrupt movement had carried him some minutes before, facing Dr. Vallotson, who was favouring him with a pompous recital of a civic difficulty. Rather behind North sat Mrs. Vallotson, knitting steadily, as she had been doing for the last hour and a half. Constance was established at the extreme end of the room, apparently absorbed in the intricacies of a piece of embroidery.

Except for certain little contemptuous lights which came and went about his mouth, North's countenance was as impassive as a man's may be. His pose, as

he stood leaning one shoulder against the mantelpiece, was indifferently attentive, and a trifle constrained.

He had been five hours in Dr. Vallotson's house, and before the first five minutes had passed he had been aware that his visit was a futility and a mistake. How and by what means the consciousness had been brought home to him, he hardly knew or cared to know. Dr. Vallotson had received him with a pompous effusiveness for which he had not been prepared, and which had as little effect upon him as had the freezing demeanour of Constance.

Mrs. Vallotson's reception of him had been characterised by just that measure of stiff civility that she would have accorded to a stranger. She had spoken little, seeming to impose upon herself of set purpose a rigid neutrality of demeanour. It seemed to be even in spite of herself that her contact with North Branston created as of old an atmosphere of constraint and unexpressed antagonism, and it was in spite of himself that North Branston realised that atmosphere. He had been resisting its influence all the evening, sneering at the oppression it produced in him, sneering at the bitter sense of frustration of which he was conscious. Urged by the cynical half contempt that was his most prominent sensation, he had roused himself to talk cleverly and flippantly. But as he stood now with his eyes absently fixed on Dr. Vallotson, he was intensely conscious of the silent woman's figure seated a little behind him, motionless save for the incessant movement of the hands.

At the sound of her voice he started slightly, and turned his head involuntarily, though Dr. Vallotson was still speaking. Mrs. Vallotson was not addressing him, however. Constance at the other end of the room was placing her work materials in the little silk bag that hung on her frame, and her mother spoke to her in a low but rather sharply-pitched voice.

"What are you putting your things away for, Constance?" she said. "Are you going to bed?"

Constance had finished her preparations, and she rose as she answered, speaking like her mother in a low tone, that seemed to shut out the two men, and isolate the mother and daughter in a mutual confidence.

"Yes, mother," she said. "It's half-past ten."

The quick movement of Mrs. Vallotson's hands was suspended for a moment. She glanced at the clock, and then at her daughter, intending apparently to utter an imperious objection.

Then she hesitated. Her expression changed; she fastened her knitting needles securely into her ball of wool and rose abruptly.

"Very well," she said. "We will both go."

In spite of the undertone in which this dialogue had been carried on, Dr. Vallotson's flow of speech had faltered on his wife's first word, and now, as Mrs. Vallotson and her daughter turned towards them, the two men met them in silence.

"Constance and I are going to say good-night," said Mrs. Vallotson formally. "You and North will like to smoke, of course."

She addressed her husband, but it was North who answered. Constance, with her most dignified demeanour, had moved forward to say good-night to him, and as he just touched the hand that she held out to him, he said:

"I won't detain Constance for a moment. But if you can wait a little, Adelaide, I should like to speak to you."

Mrs. Vallotson paused, facing him across Constance's small dark head. For an instant their eyes met, and an odd shudder ran through him; one of those strange and unaccountable jarrings of the nerves which make the old superstition as to a footstep on the waiting grave so comprehensible. Then with a tacit movement of assent Mrs. Vallotson deliberately reseated herself. North waited in silence while Constance bade her father good-night, and conveyed her superior presence out of the room. Then he turned to Mrs. Vallotson.

Before he could speak, however, Mrs. Vallotson forestalled him. She was sitting very erect, one clenched hand lying on the table beside her.

"Robert," she said harshly, "I don't imagine that North's communication, whatever it may be, is likely to interest you. His private affairs needn't trouble you. You may as well go on to the smoking-room."

Dr. Vallotson hesitated, and looked dubiously towards North. There was that in his wife's tone which made it distinctly undesirable that he should remain; but within his own breast there was a lively curiosity that made it distinctly undesirable that he should withdraw. Before he could commit himself, however, North Branston interposed.

"My private affairs need trouble no one, thank you, Adelaide," he said; "and if Dr. Vallotson will wait half a minute, I will go

with him to the smoking-room. I only wanted to tell you that I am engaged to be married, and that my wedding will take place in about six weeks."

He had made the communication in quite other tones and in other words than those which he had intended. Spoken as he had spoken it now, it had assumed the character of an uncompromising defiance. But its effect upon Mrs. Vallotson was hardly such as might have been expected. With so sharp a turn of her head, and so strange a change in her eyes, as seemed in some odd way to convey the exclamation that she did not utter, she looked from her husband to North Branston. She gazed at the latter in silence for about a moment, and then her clenched hand slowly relaxed.

"You are engaged to be married!" she said slowly. "To be married!"

"I am really delighted to hear it," said Dr. Vallotson, with tentative effusion. "Delighted, indeed! In our profession, my dear boy, a man ought to marry. It's positively necessary that he should marry if he is to attain any position. I hope you've done as well for yourself in this as in other ways."

Mrs. Vallotson had paused, and her husband's speech had filled up an apparent gap in the conversation; but neither his wife nor North took the faintest notice of him.

They were not looking at one another. Mrs. Vallotson was looking straight before her, and North was gloomily regarding the carpet at his feet; but each seemed to be oblivious of any other presence than the other's.

"Have you been engaged long?" said Mrs. Vallotson.

"Two days," returned North.

"And you are to be married?"

"In about six weeks," said North.

There was another pause, and this time Dr. Vallotson did not attempt to fill it in. Then Mrs. Vallotson rose, resting one hand rather heavily on the table. She looked straight at North, and in her face there was an extraordinary blending of the old repulsion with a strange, unconscious softening.

"I hope you will be happy," she said slowly.

With a quick involuntary movement, moved he hardly knew why or how, North Branston crossed the space that divided them, and caught her hand.

"Thank you, Adelaide," he said, a little hoarsely.

She had drawn her hand away from him, and was turning almost unconsciously as it seemed towards the door, when Dr. Vallotson's voice broke the moment's silence:

"And who is the lady?" he said, with pompous suavity. "You haven't told us that yet. Who is the lady?"

Mrs. Vallotson, close to the door, paused and turned back.

"Yes," she said. "What is her name?"

North moved abruptly. A dull red flush crept over his forehead.

"You know the name," he said. "You know her personally. I don't know whether it will surprise you or not, but I'm going to marry Sir William Karslake's widow."

What the sound was that turned them simultaneously towards the door; whether it was a hoarse cry, a stifled groan, or merely a terrible inarticulate rattle in the throat, neither of the two men ever knew. Looking towards the door, they saw Mrs. Vallotson recoiled against it, one hand clutching at the handle, the other dropped nerveless at her side, staring at North Branston with eyes that stood out wide and burning from a drawn and livid face.

Before either man could speak, almost before they had fully realised the change which had come upon her, with an effort of will so tremendous that its action seemed to turn her face into a stone mask, Mrs. Vallotson regained her self-command. She stood there motionless, still gazing at North Branston, but a singular haze seemed to have fallen over her burning eyes.

"Have you kept up with that woman ever since you left Alnchester?" she said.

Her voice was dull and toneless, like the voice of a woman walking in her sleep.

North Branston's lips tightened and his eyes gleamed ominously. His voice as he responded was rigidly measured and self-controlled.

"Adelaide," he said, "I don't want to quarrel with you. I came down with quite another end in view. But you must be careful what you say. You made a mistake eighteen months ago; you said things I don't care to remember. Don't go back on them."

"Was there an understanding between you before her husband died?"

She had spoken in precisely the same expressionless tone, but as she finished her own words seemed to rouse her. Ghastly grey shadows had gathered about her mouth, and as she put up her hand and pushed the grey hair from her temples, on which there stood great drops of moisture, her hand was shaking like a leaf. She moved with abrupt, uncertain steps, and sat

down heavily. She did not look at North, whose face was darkened, on her words, into the rigidity of unutterable contempt.

"You cannot marry her," she said.

The atmosphere which had weighted the whole evening had developed itself at last; developed and declared itself. It seemed to rise and fill the room like a tangible blackness, a fitting setting for those two dark, set faces. They were alone together. Dr. Vallotson had left the room unnoticed; unnoticed as he would have been had he remained.

"Why not?"

The words contained no temporising. They simply passed to the consummation of the situation demanding this declaration which, at the same time, they utterly defied. Mrs. Vallotson met them with an uncompromising determination which was the very counterpart of that which faced her. But she was gripping the table heavily as she spoke, and the coarse power of her personality seemed to labour as under an overwhelming disability.

"It would be a scandal," she said. She seemed to breathe with difficulty. "All Alnchester talked of your relations to one another two years ago. Marriage between you would justify the worst that was said of you."

North Branston strode across the room and faced her, looking down at her with his white face working into passion.

"Adelaide," he said, "stop! You're saying what you know to be untrue. Speak out. Say that you have a grudge against the woman who is all that you are not. Say that you disliked her from the moment you saw her. Say that your infernal love of power is loth to see me escape from the intolerable loneliness you've created for me. Say that it's your will, alone, that is against my marriage."

As though his words in their uncompromising defiance had penetrated through the weight that hung about her, touching the dominant chord of her nature, Mrs. Vallotson rose to her feet confronting him. Her tall, strong figure seemed to expand and dilate; her face was suffused with colour, her eyes were bloodshot and wild. Coarse as her strength was in its unrestrained manifestation, there was a desperation in that sudden gathering of herself together which gave to her instinctive self-assurance a touch of magnificence.

"So be it," she cried. "It is against my will! Once and for all I tell you so! It shall not be. The woman you have chosen is no fit wife for you. You shall not marry her."

North Branston looked into her eyes and answered her.

"I shall marry her!" he said.

"With my consent, never!"

"Without it, then!"

A short, fierce laugh broke from him, and on the instant she stretched out her hand and laid it on his arm, gripping it with fingers of steel.

"Look back," she said hoarsely. "Look back over your life, and then say if you dare. If you defy me now, it is for the last time. I will never see you again. I will never hear your name mentioned. I will wipe you out of my life for ever. You owe me everything, you owe this woman nothing. Choose between us."

They were close together. The hot breath of each was on the other's face. The white heat of passion was throbbing at North Branston's heart, and he smiled.

"I do choose," he said. "You've thwarted me from first to last, I might have known you'd thwart me now. We hate each other, you and I—Heaven knows the reason. We'll cut our lives asunder from to-night."

INCREDULITY.

One suffers from having too little faith as well as from having too much. The individual who, as the records of the police-courts inform us, shows his "confidence" in a perfect stranger by entrusting him with his loose cash and valuables, is an example of too much faith. The man who, refusing to believe that his house can be on fire, is burnt in his bed, is an illustration of too little.

When to be incredulous is a thing well worth knowing. Think of the number of people who have had cause to regret their having been incredulous at the wrong time. If you had only believed in the future development of Slapton-by-the-Sea, what a fortune you might have made by a judicious investment in building sites twenty years ago! There was the Shell-out Mine—you might have been a millionaire if you had only believed in it in time. Look at your old chum, Jack Baines; you always were incredulous about that man's abilities. If you had only followed his lead, and stuck tight to his side, and not suggested that he was something worse than a fool, you might have been where he is now—at the top of the tree. Incredulity has kept you down.

The cynic who assures you that he believes in nothing and nobody is very far from being as clever as he would have you suppose; nor has his experience of the world been as extensive as he wishes you to think. Such a person is apt to see himself in others. If he really means what he says—and you will be safe in being, on that point, yourself a little incredulous—it is because he has, probably with good and sufficient reason, no faith in himself, and, therefore, none in others. It is tolerably certain that the man who believes in himself believes in some one else as well. It is "against nature" to suppose that any one can be so hardened in conceit as to imagine that there is no one but himself in the whole wide world deserving of a ray of credit. The man who believes in himself, finding others to believe in him, is bound to believe in them, or, obviously, he loses faith in himself.

If faith removes mountains, want of it raises them. If we believe that there is an insurmountable barrier between us and happiness, there is one—because we ourselves have placed it there. If we say of ourselves we have nothing, we have nothing—because we say it. Incredulity is not strength, it is weakness. Given the choice between belief in everything and belief in nothing, better by far, for us, the first. The credulous man makes no more failures than the incredulous; the odds are large that he makes more successes. While our mood is one of incredulity, never for a moment shall we attain possession of the elusive thing which we call happiness; credulity and happiness go hand in hand. To the incredulous man nothing is real; he doubts the love of wife and child; to him the whole social fabric is as unworthy of serious attention as some passing dream.

Incredulity, in some of its shapes, is a sign of disease. Dyspepsia breeds taunting fiends of unbelief. How can a man believe in the perfection of the dish which the cook has set before him, if he does not suffer a morsel of it to pass his lips? The being who is racked by nervous headache is not likely to have a lively belief in the soothing effects of music. Who is not doubtful if there is anything pleasurable in the sound of children's laughter when he is ill? The sufferer from chronic gout is scarcely to be persuaded of the exhilarating effects of exercise. The diseased man, being an unhappy man, is an incredulous man; it is only when, disease departing, health takes its place, that belief comes with it.

Incredulity, again, is a sign of incapacity. Some folks find it impossible to believe that others can do what they cannot. They doubt if Palette painted that picture of his, which is the success of the year, because they are conscious that they never could have painted it. They have no faith in Struggler's ability to make his way in the world, being aware that such ability is wanting in themselves. Such folks are, in great measure, the creatures of ignorance. Their horizon is limited, they can see nothing beyond it. Tell an agricultural labourer in certain parts of the country, that in London fresh vegetables are procurable at very moderate prices all the year round, he does not believe you—unbelief in his case being born of ignorance. Or tell the same man that in Australia Christmas Day falls in the hottest part of the year, the chances are that he will doubt you again. Ignorance may be responsible for a deal of credulity; much incredulity may be laid at its door as well.

Incredulity, once more, may be the outcome of a moral or a mental twist. Some men are constitutionally incapable of believing in certain other men. One sees this characteristic amusingly displayed in politics. According to the Radicals, nothing good ever came, or ever could come, out of the Conservative camp; while Conservatives look askance at all Radical offspring, as if they were of necessity predestined to evil from the first. The same thing is seen to an even greater extent in religion. Consider the great multitude of Christians who are constitutionally incapable of believing that there can be good in any other religious system than their own. How many Protestants are there who hold it incredible that any good thing can come out of Rome? Can you number the Romanists who are without faith in anything the Protestants ever did? A similar peculiarity is seen in races. There are many Irishmen who can believe in nothing but Saxon "perfidy," many Poles who can believe in nothing but Russian "wickedness," many Bohemians who can believe in nothing but the German "brute," many Englishmen who can believe in nothing but the "unspeakable" Turk.

The persecution of people for their opinions, the taste for which, to some extent, still survives, is a mistake for many reasons; but chiefly is it a mistake because so few people can be held responsible for their own opinions. Catholics seem to have burnt Protestants, and Protestants Catholics, because both sides contended that if the one side only chose to exercise the faculties

of reason bestowed by nature, that side would be where the other side was. The idea rested on the erroneous assumption that people arrive at their beliefs, or unbeliefs, by processes of logic. Few notions could be less correct. At least ninety per cent. of the inhabitants of these islands, if they were put into the witness-box, would probably be found incapable of giving one logical reason why they do, or do not, believe. A rather amusing instance of the sort of thing crossed my path the other day. A notorious "unbeliever" has long resided in a certain place I know. Recently I was informed that he had been "converted." Meeting him, I asked if this was so. He said that it was, adding, by way of explaining his conversion, "My little Tommy got run over by a butcher's cart—killed dead on the spot—and that was enough for me. It would have been enough for any man." The logic of this was delightful; if the man on similar grounds had been "converted," say, to Confucianism, a Christian missionary would have classed him at once as something lower than an idiot. Yet in England every day thousands of people are beginning to believe, or ceasing to believe, on slighter grounds than those which were furnished by little Tommy and the cart.

We may take it that logic has little or nothing to do with any one's belief, or with any one's want of it. A man may think that it has; but if he knows himself and diligently searches his own heart, he will begin to doubt it before he has done. Many people are physically, constitutionally, incapable of being "persuaded" on any subject whatsoever, just as there are many who are incapable of being "unpersuaded." But apart from these, generally speaking, we may say that in matters of belief we are creatures of environment, of accident, coincidence. In other words, our beliefs are outside ourselves, uncontrollable, the sport of circumstance. We are incredulous, or credulous, because we are; you will get no further! We see John Jones steal; we know he is a thief; but what is it which, in spite of our knowledge of his theft, makes us believe that there is in him something infinitely greater than a thief?

I know nothing of John Jones. I never saw him. I know nothing of the particular circumstances of his case; but I believe that there is in him something which is infinitely greater than a thief. I doubt, though you unloosed on my head floods of logic, if you would shake my belief; logic, regarded merely as logic, is not likely to move me much either one way or the other. The way in which I arrive at my belief is, broadly speaking, sufficiently simple. My experience of the world and its ways has taught me, or has seemed to teach me, that men, in certain distinguishing characteristics, are colourable imitations of each other. The ultimate trend of those characteristics is largely a matter of accident. I know that in man there are all sorts of possibilities—in the direction of what is called evil, and in the direction of what is called good. I am a man, John Jones is a man; there you are! I am certain that in John Jones there is something which is infinitely greater than a thief.

At the same time I am aware that to many people not only will my reasoning seem no reasoning, but that they will deem it almost incredible that I can have such a belief. Think of the myriads who believe in the doctrine of original sin; who believe that men are predestined to evil as the sparks fly upwards; that no good thing can come out of them except by what is tantamount to miracle! In what light are they likely to regard John Jones? To me it seems almost incredible that any one can have such a belief; but I know that they have. It seems that they scarcely can be sane; but I know that they are. I am conscious that it is only another illustration of the personal irresponsibility of folks for the faith which is in them.

Those whose natural attitude is in the direction of credulity have, in many respects, the best of it. In how many things one would believe, if one only could! How many illusions are lost to us by the necessity for unbelief! If we could only hold fast to all the beliefs we have in our youth until we reached the grave! They say that the world is not so credulous as it used to be; but on that point I for one must own to incredulity. The young men and women seem to be just as full of dreams as ever they were—of just those sort of dreams which always have been, and which always will be, the heritage of youth. Think, for instance, of all the talk which is in the air just now about "new" things. If we listen to the young men and to the young women, everything is either "new" already, or it is immediately going to be "new." It is a "new" era, in which there are, or in which there soon will be, "new" women, "new" poetry, "new" literature, "new" art, "new" politics, "new" parties, "new" morals, "new" religion. Some time ago a

very clever gentleman wrote to ask me to contribute to a forthcoming periodical, which, so he said, was to "voice" the "new" fiction. I told him that I did not know what the "new" fiction was; I do not now, for, as it appeared to my limited comprehension, the explanation which he proffered only made confusion worse confounded.

For my part I doubt not only if there is anything new, but if there ever has been anything new, or if there ever will be. Men always have been fond of what they vainly imagined to be new things; it is an outcome of the restlessness which is inherent in human nature. The fondness was seen even in that newest of all places, the Garden of Eden; and was, possibly, not much more of a novelty then than it is to-day. How any one can say that the world is becoming less credulous when all this stir is being made about "new" things, surpasses one's understanding.

The world always has been and always will be credulous while youth remains. Youth is the oldest of the old things—and the youngest. It is the one thing which is always new. Youth, if it is worth anything, is self-assertive. It has to make its way, and to do so it pushes its way. It believes in itself, and, not infrequently, a necessary accompaniment of its belief in itself seems to be an unbelief in age. It believes that it has a better way; the things which are undone, and which are still to do, are always the best. It is only natural that the young man should believe that the thing which he is about to do will be well worth the doing. To him the future is the Tom Tiddler's ground from whose soil he shall win the things which are both beautiful and new; for him the crock of gold at the end of the rainbow always is in front. He sees the things which are; he perceives their seamy side—the young men have keen eyes for the weak places in the works which their fathers have wrought. He tells himself they can be bettered; shall he not be the one to do it?

This attitude is characteristic, we may be told, only of a section of the rising generation—and a small section it is. Modern youth, in the lump, is pessimistic; its position is one of constant negation; it believes in nothing, least of all does it believe in itself. That there are fools among young men is past denying, it is as true as that some of them are diseased. But if one is told that a healthy young man is a pessimist, i.e., that he has no faith in himself or in others, one smiles. A couple of years ago a young man who, as a pessimist, went many leagues farther than Schopenhauer, used to write me letters. There was nothing in the world but ugliness; life, in itself, was a catastrophe; virtue was vice, and vice was virtue, and both alike were foul—according to this young man. He himself, he frankly owned, was but a hideous atom in the common sewer. That is more than a couple of years ago. He has tasted of success since then—has actually married. When last I heard from him he said something about the beauty which is to be discovered even in animalcula—he still is young.

Is not this pessimism, which we are assured is a feature of our latter-day young men and maidens, in itself a sign of their youth, a proof of their credulity? As a matter of plain fact, fortunately for them and fortunately for us, our youths are just as young as ever they were; they display their greenness all the more conspicuously by their pretensions to the sere and yellow. This period of faithlessness in which so many of them suppose themselves to be, in the days when Carlyle was a power in the land, used to be called the period of "Sturm und Drang." Kingsley went through it, and Maurice, and the rest of the "muscular Christians;" it was "Sturm und Drang" which swept John Henry Newman and his friends into boundless faith.

We pray, some of us, that all our faculties may be preserved to us. Surely we include in our prayers the faculty of belief—if ever we had it! What is the use of believing that life is not worth living? How much better off if we can only believe that it is! If I can go to bed and lay my head upon the pillows and fall asleep, secure in the belief that to-morrow will bring forth pleasure and not pain, is not that belief worth having? We smile at the miracles which are stated to have taken place at Lourdes, and, still more recently, at Holywell. But think of the power of faith which the mention of such things suggests—and faith is a power, even in the healing of the diseases of the body. If Brown and I are lame, and Brown believes that he will be cured, and I do not believe that I shall be, surely Brown is better off than I am, even though his belief is never justified by events! And experience teaches us that the chances in favour of his cure are greater than they are in mine.

Beyond doubt the situations in life in which credulity is more to be desired than

incredulity are in the majority, though at first blush the assertion may seem to be a bold one. The common conversation of the world pretends otherwise, and, in so pretending, is guilty of a false pretence. Great things may have been done by unbelief, much greater things have certainly been done by belief. One might almost go so far as to say that while it is well to look, and to be careful that you have good grounds for belief, it is better to believe, even without good grounds. The man—if such an one actually exists—who really and truly does believe in nothing and in no one, must be, of all creatures, the most miserable.

The incredulous man is the critical man, and the critical man can scarcely be the happiest man. He who looks even a gift horse in the mouth would be almost better off without the faculty of vision. If Darby did indeed travel happily to the end of his journey with his old wife Joan, it was because his was not the critical vision. I protest that the tears come to my eyes when I read or hear of the man who believes, honestly believes, in the charms of his wife, even though she be toothless and grey. They are tears of envy—I would that it may be so with me. Love—that is love, not the frenzied female fictionist's high-falutin' kind of thing—is the breath of life, the thing which makes life better than death. If a man has no sort of belief in the woman he has folded in his arms, how shall he love her? Without faith how shall any love? That shall not be a good day for you in which your Joan casts behind her back the last shred of her belief in you. To be believed in—is that not worth having? To believe in some one else—is that not worth having too?

The world of pure reason hardly commends itself to the imagination as a world it would be nice to live in. If everything were to be done by rule of thumb some of the pleasantest things—which, in the world as it is, we do—would needs be left undone. If we had to give the why and the wherefore of the faith that is in us, faith of any sort would rapidly become an extinct quantity. One finds it difficult to conceive how that would advantage either the fractions or the whole. If we only knew it, one of the chief things for which we ought to be thankful is the fallibility of human nature. Our very weakness is our strength. We are not strong enough to insist upon reason always being our guide, and it is lucky for us that we are not. When the Marchioness in "The Old Curiosity Shop" put the orange-peel into the water and "made believe" that it was wine, it was certainly not the spirit of reason which she summoned from the "vasty deep," and she was happier than if it had been. Not only believe, but "make believe"—many are the crises in our lives when we should be happy if we could even get as far as that.

"This is an age of incredulity!" The parrot cry is being bandied from mouth to mouth, and from pen to pen. Like all generalisations the statement is easier made than proved. But if the thing is really true, if all the things which folks have believed in for so long are not believed in any more, the more's the pity—for the world! I am glad to still be able to write myself among the credulous; more, I believe that those who pretend to believe least, at the bottom of their hearts are as credulous as I am. They must, when the sun is shining, occasionally believe in the joy of life; even when the skies are darkened, they must, occasionally, believe in the tonic qualities of the bracing winds. Somewhere there is a man or a woman in whom they must believe. And if they will only look into their own lives and see how little worthy of trust they are themselves, though conscious all the time of their desire to be worthy, knowing how pleasant a thing it is to be believed in, surely for their own sakes, consenting to be a little credulous, they will sow the seed of faith broadcast, even though some of it may fall on stony ground.

"THRIFT."

A COMPLETE STORY.

His mother had insisted on calling him Thrift. No one knew why she had given him the quaint name. Then when he was barely two years old, she died. She left him with a great wealth of silent love, but that, like his name, could not help him much. That is, not as far as one can judge things. The neighbours said it was a cough that had "settled," that carried her off. Probably the cough had something to do with it, but a starved-out life of lack of affection, and hard work, had a good deal more.

The neighbours also thought that Mrs. Watson never had much spirit. It would seem as if they almost blamed her for dying, and leaving a husband with a child barely two years old. They had misgivings about the boy, and there they were right. Thrift was deaf and dumb. His mother had

struggled against the knowledge as long as she could. When she realised it she kept the knowledge to herself with a fierce love. But the cough came, and settled all the problems of her life for her.

Thrift's father took her death as apathetically as he had taken her all her life. Only Thrift seemed to realise that fate was still against him. He lay crying for hours alone in the little cottage, strapped into his cot. It was a weird, pathetic cry. The neighbours were kind to him. They took him in turn to their cottages, but the element of teasing children and rough handling was discordant to him. The women meant well, but it was a hard winter, and money and tempers were short. Besides, Thrift's baby nature was hard to understand.

Brightness came into his life one day. It came in the guise of a little dressmaker, Jean Lawrence. She brought him a black frock. She had been busy, so she had put off the making till she had time. No one else had thought of the little mark of respect. It was a tribute to custom, but it was the one tribute of Mrs. Watson's life.

"Puir little lamb!" said Jean Lawrence as she came in. Her eyes filled with quite unexpected tears as she saw the lonely baby.

Thrift could not hear her, but something sympathetic touched his understanding, for he held out his hands. "Puir little thing!" said Jean Lawrence again, and she caught him up and covered him with kisses. Then she put Thrift back in his cot, and untied the little black frock. She turned to go, for she was in a hurry.

Thrift's mood changed. His blue eyes grew dark in the intensity of his passion. He kicked and screamed. His fluffy fair hair was ruffled, he looked the picture of a little demon.

"Presairve us!" said the little dressmaker.

It was the first time any exaggeration of feeling had come into her life. She was half fascinated and half terrified by this unexpected burst. "Presairve us!" she repeated more emphatically. She never could explain afterwards what prompted her, but she stepped to the cot, wrapped a blanket round Thrift, and did not stop to think till she had deposited him safely in her own house. It was characteristic of Jean Lawrence that she never reasoned out why she had done this action. Certainly she never regretted it. It was quite an easy matter to settle the disposal of Thrift with his father. He was only too glad to be rid of the burden.

The first clashing of wills occurred over the same little black frock. Thrift ungratefully refused to have anything to do with it. Miss Lawrence was perplexed. It would never do to dress him in colours on a Sunday. She compromised by making him a white frock, with a broad black sash. It set off the child's fairness, but still more it satisfied her sense of fitness.

Jean Lawrence always thought of that episode as an epoch in her life. The next epoch was the sudden resolve of Thrift's father to go to America. Jean Lawrence lived in a state of tension till he had sailed. It seemed incredible to her that he could wish to leave his boy behind. She only saw the extreme desirability of Thrift in any manner and way. Thrift's father did not.

It was soon after this that Jean Lawrence's old lover returned to his native village. This caused more thought in the village than Jean herself gave to it. It was ten years since John Forbes and she had been going to be married, and ten years is a long time in a woman's life! Since Thrift had entered her life she was utterly oblivious of anything except her work. The more money she made, the more she could do for Thrift.

Jean Lawrence had always kept to herself, and no one knew why she and John Forbes had never married.

Her old mother was alive then, and every one knew she would have liked the match. John Forbes had come back greyer and older than he had gone away, but he was richer and even more able to afford a wife.

Time had not gone very well with Jean. She was thin and small always, and she had had a hard life of work. Her sparse drab hair was beginning to be sprinkled with grey. She looked older than she really was. The village came to the conclusion that John Forbes "would go by her, and seek a younger, bonnier woman." The two most concerned gave no cause for gossip.

John Forbes would sometimes stop as he was passing the little cottage, and say a few words. There never was any allusion to past times between them. They called each other Mr. Forbes and Miss Lawrence studiously. That was the only clue either of them had that there was a mutual past between them.

On the Sundays that Jean went to church—her thoughts were always divided between the bairn at home and the Psalms, to her great discomfiture — John Forbes would sometimes overtake her. They talked of the sermon; then of the crops and the

weather. By degrees these subjects gained an easy familiarity, and only varied with the seasons.

No one was more surprised than Jean, when John Forbes asked her, one day, to marry him. She stared at him in emotionless calm.

"Ye must gie me time," she said.

John Forbes agreed to this quite placidly. It was hard to understand what he saw in his first love in her faded and aged old-maidism. Possibly a tenacity of affection and the same instinct of faithfulness that brought him back to the little village, the little village with no pretensions to beauty or picturesqueness, kept him true to Jean. One was the home, the other the woman he had loved. He saw no reason to change because he had seen many fairer homes and younger, prettier women.

Jean did not analyse her sentiments. It was not her way. Besides, love never entered her head as far as it concerned John Forbes. She merely reviewed the advantages as they concerned Thrift. The rumour that a new and more modern dressmaker was going to set up finally settled it, and she said John yes.

The day was fixed for the second time in their lives. Jean had given up her house. She was waiting with tranquillity for this new step in her life. She had quite come to the conclusion that she could not do better for Thrift. One evening John Forbes arrived. Thrift lay contentedly on the hearthrug looking at him. The last time John had been at the cottage Thrift had been in one of his passionate fits.

This had set him pondering.

After this there had been several well-meant efforts at kindness on the part of his friends. They happened to coincide with his own views. They advised him to send Thrift away. Jean, they said, would neglect every one and everything for the Boy. She would wear herself out for Thrift, but not bother with anything that did not concern him.

How far he believed this, or how far a man's dislike to scenes or a natural desire to have his wife's affection centred in himself had to do with his resolve, he could not have told. He bestirred himself, and with infinite trouble and by some outlay he secured an admission for the child to a deaf and dumb institution.

It was this fact he had come to tell Jean. He rather wished Thrift would help him to lead up to it by a scene. Thrift gave him no help. He lay smiling impenetrably.

Jean was not quick at reading signs.

"Jean," he said at last helplessly, "we'll be merrit Tuesday?"

"Ay," assented Jean cheerfully. Her eyes fell naturally on Thrift, and she smiled at the boy.

"And Thrift?" John added, with a suspiciously clear note of interrogation in his voice.

"Ay, Thrift," she repeated.

"Ay, Thrift," said John. Then finding this even did not progress matters, he said desperately, with a snatch at humour: "Ye ken I'm no merrying Thrift?"

The old clock ticked through the room. The peats spluttered on the low hearth, in front of which on a curiously woven rug Thrift lay.

There was absolute silence for a bit. Then Jean's voice broke it.

"Then, John Forbes, ye're no merrying me."

Again there was silence.

John said in a quiet voice:

"I hae made a' the arrangements for him, Jean. He will gang to a schule fa' they'll teach him to read, and write, and understand talk of a kind."

"Will they teach him to talk like ither fowk?"

Her tone was expressionless.

"Na, they canna dae that."

"Then why should the bairn be bothered wi' learning that'll niver dae him or ony one else any gude? Tell me that, John Forbes."

"It will give him employment, Jean, and besides—" here John Forbes with a man's tactlessness undid every bit of good his arguments might have effected. He added: "Fowk tell me ye just mak' an idol o' him, and that ye hae nae ither idea but him. A man couldna be expeck'd to stan' that, and ither people kenning it."

Jean had been passing through a crisis, and she was but a woman.

"And if fowk care to gossip over my affairs, John Forbes, and you care to heed them, let them," she retorted vehemently. "If Thrift disna gang wi' me, nae poo'rs will tak' me to your hoose."

John was annoyed by her tone.

"And supposing I say I winna hae Thrift?"

They sat on in a strained silence.

John was too angry to move or speak. Jean had no wish, either, to break the silence.

"Ye ken this is the second time your obstinacy has come in the wye," said John finally.

"I mind," said Jean briefly. "But I

didna mean ye to tak' it as ye did yon time," she added.

"I didna ken," replied John.

It struck neither of them that there was any pathos in the sentence—a pathos of a ten years' mistaken silence!

"Are ye sure ye mean it noo?" he asked, getting up.

"I certainly dae," said Jean firmly.

"Then guid-bye, Jean."

"Guid-bye."

The instant the door was shut Jean almost strangled Thrift with kisses.

Unfortunately the practical things could not be settled so summarily.

Jean had given up her house, and she found it was let to the new dressmaker. She was not accustomed to complications in her life. Alternatives seemed to crop up, and they worried her. At the same time Thrift was her one object. Everything was directed to this aim. After some few weeks she got a tumble-down little cottage about half a mile from the straggly village. It proved too far, or the "hang" of the new dressmaker's skirts proved too much for Jean's old customers. Work and pay became scant. The little dressmaker bore up proudly and bravely. She stinted and starved herself, but Thrift grew and flourished. There loomed before her always a fear of the "Charity" where her boy might be taught—and no one knew at what expense of unkindness.

If the worst came to the worst she would ask John Forbes to get him in, and she would become a servant. One wintry evening the child was fretful and ailing. A knock came to the door and John Forbes entered. He did not seem to notice the extreme poverty of the cottage, nor the miserable attempt at the fire. This fact brought a rush of gratitude to Jean's heart. It was to see if these things were as bad as report said, that he had come.

He took Thrift up on his knee, and he talked occasionally to Jean.

"Can I dae onything for ye?" he said suddenly. "For the boy, ye ken."

A little flush came in Jean's cheeks. She faltered her thanks.

In a rush of love for Thrift she began faintly to realise that she had not appreciated this man as he deserved. In the same moment she realised she had thrown her chance away.

No idea that she might work on her old lover's pity crossed her mind. She began timidly asking him if he could manage to send Thrift to the home he had mentioned.

"Why noo, when ye were so set against it?" asked John, with a severity that was not reassuring.

"It's circumstances," said Jean briefly.

She felt she would die rather than let John Forbes know there was nothing in the house to eat and no money. She would have risked everything but the fear of Thrift falling ill.

"Weel," said John slowly, "I'll see aboot it. But hoo wull ye pay me, Jean?"

The little dressmaker drew herself up.

"There'll be no fear o' that, John Forbes."

"But ye hivna tell't me in fat wye, Jean."

"In honest money by honest wark."

The pink flush had deepened into a deep crimson on her cheek.

"But I dinna want your money, and as for wark, suppose ye come and wark for me."

"Na, na," said Jean involuntarily. She had had her chance of being mistress at the farm. She could not stoop to work for another, as she supposed he meant.

"Weel, come wi'oot doing ony wark."

Jean looked at him in utter bewilderment.

"The difference atween us lay in Thrift. If he gaes awa' there's naething need hinder your coming to the farm."

"I didna expec' ye'd think I meant yon," said the little woman. She was thoroughly hurt. "I'll thank ye a' the days o' my life if ye'll dae for Thrift, but I am no seeking to be beholden to you for mysel'."

"Ye'll be gey lonely wi'oot Thrift."

"Ay." Jean nearly smiled because she was so near to tears at the thought.

"I'll be lonely at the farm."

"Ye can mairry," said Jean. She suddenly felt that she had cut herself off from every possibility by her suggestion. She had done it for Thrift all along; she would have married him for Thrift's sake, she gave him up for Thrift's sake. Now Thrift by her own act was to go away from her. And John Forbes was nothing to her. The unexpected touch of kindness had brought a rush of sympathy to her heart. She did not know it, but it had broken down the barrier that her love for Thrift had built up round her woman's heart.

"Ay," answered John Forbes slowly. "But ye maun ask me this time, Jean."

"Oh, I couldna," faltered Jean. She felt confused and trembling. She looked down.

"And I winna, nae a third time."

"I'm no fit to be a leddy noo," she murmured.

Then she looked up. John saw in her eyes a look he had not seen for more than the ten years.

"Jean!"

"John!"

That was all the love-making that passed between them, but they understood each other then.

When John went out, Jean seized Thrift and kissed him as she had done once before.

But she knew that for the first time since he had come into her life he had only the second place. She thought she hid the fact in her inmost heart, but John Forbes guessed it. He had the tact to hide his knowledge from his wife. For the Tact that Love brings is often the highest wisdom!

THE HAPPY LAND.

THERE are three things which nearly every man, however limited his knowledge or experience, believes himself able to do, i.e., choose a horse, understand a woman, and govern a country. It is the latter delusion which has led so many clever men, from Plato down to Mr. Bellamy, to give us their conception of a Happy Land, wherein a prosperous and law-abiding people live contentedly under an ideal government. These conceptions have naturally differed widely with the period and country in which they have been imagined, but in one important respect a strong family likeness runs through them all. This similarity is to be found in the fact that the majority of the theoretical arrangements, whether social or political, are wholly incapable of being put into practice. Like Carlyle, these philosophers of the art of governing seem to think that they have done their part in giving ideas to the world; they leave lesser men to carry them to a practical conclusion.

It is probable that few of us would care to live in a New Republic, though many of the Platonic theories were based on sound common sense, while others would be considered remarkably liberal and enlightened even at the present day. The New Woman would certainly hail the sage of Athens as a valuable ally—if only for his assertion that women should have the same education as men, namely, music, gymnastics, and the art of war. The fact that women are unlike men he held to be no reason why they should have a different training, but rather the reverse, contending that the actual amount of sexual divergence could not be discovered until the conditions of life of both sexes were precisely similar, and had been so for generations. He looked forward to the day when the whole State should go out to war as one great family, and believed that custom would soon do away with the idea of there being anything ridiculous in the sight of a stout, middle-aged lady bestriding a war-horse, or even competing with men in the arena.

It is doubtful whether the Platonic marriage arrangements would be received with favour by the women of any age, these being directed entirely to the physical improvement of the race, at the cost of conjugal, maternal, and filial love. Once a year, at holy marriage festivals, men and women were to be suitably mated by government, the strong with the strong and the weak with the weak, the offspring of the inferior couples being destroyed, and that of the superior being brought up by the State. The mothers were to be taken to the public nursery to nurse the babies, but care was to be exercised that they should not recognise their own children. Although the philosopher considers this unnatural plan to be expedient, socially speaking, he admits that there are many difficulties in the way of carrying it out, but declares that an idea is none the worse for being impracticable.

Our modern Democrats and Socialists would not, it is to be feared, find the New Republic an earthly paradise, for although the inhabitants thereof were to regard each other as brothers and sisters, they were not to blink the fact that there is no such thing as natural equality. On the contrary, they were to recognise that human beings are made of different materials, some of gold, some of silver, some of copper, but that a copper parent may have a golden child, and vice versâ. The elders were to rule the younger, and the public guardians were to be men of experience, who had passed through both dangers and pleasures, and at every age had come out of such trials victorious.

While music and gymnastics were to form the principal branches of education in the New Republic, simplicity was to be the chief characteristic of its literature, art, and diet; since Sicilian cookery, Attic confections, and Corinthian courtesans are to gymnastics what Lydian and Ionic melodies are to music. Besides, where gluttony and intemperance prevail, the town quickly fills with doctors and lawyers. The Platonic

medical man, by the way, was never to attempt to keep a weakly patient alive; he was either to kill or cure, for the citizens of a well-ordered State have no time to be ill. Lawyers and poets were alike to be excluded, the former for obvious reasons, the latter because poetry is an outrage on the understanding, unless the hearers have that balm of knowledge which heals error All things considered, perhaps it is just as well that no practical experiments of the Platonic social theories have ever been made, or are likely to be made if we may believe the prophecy of their author that "until kings are philosophers and philosophers kings, cities will never cease from evil, nor will our ideal polity ever come into being."

The "New Republic" has had a numerous posterity; indeed, the books that have been inspired by the dream of a Happy Land would form quite a respectable library in themselves. Chief among these, of course, are the "De Republica" of Cicero, the "De Civitate Dei" of Saint Augustine, the "De Monarchia" of Dante, the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More, and the "New Atlantis" of Bacon. The two latter are naturally the most interesting to us, and all the more so because, although they owe their being to their famous Greek predecessor, they contain almost more points of divergence from, than of resemblance to the "New Republic."

Sir Thomas More, like Plato, was in many respects centuries in advance of his age. The sympathy, humanity, and spirit of toleration which distinguish "Utopia" from earlier works of the same nature, are due in a measure, no doubt, to the stirring influences of the period at which it was conceived. The murmurs of the Reformation were making themselves heard; the New Testament was beginning to be understood as it never had been understood before, and the forgotten treasures of Greek literature had come as a revelation to the scholars of fifteenth-century Europe. Some fads and many fallacies are contained in the "Utopia," but the motive and intention are so excellent and the details given so minute, that the book must always be interesting and valuable if only for the light it throws upon the social evils of the day, and the extent to which these were recognised and reprobated by the author.

There is certainly the germ of a bright idea in the Utopian arrangement that each of the cities should possess farms in the country, each farm being worked by thirty men and women, who were under the rule of the good-man and good-wife of the house. Out of every farm twenty persons went yearly to the city, and in their place as many were sent out to learn husbandry from those who had already spent a year in the country. Unfortunately, it is obvious that under such a system neither the husbandman nor the mechanic would ever learn his business thoroughly, while the authors, artists, and students would have no chance at all. But a modified version of the plan applied to the industrial classes only, might very possibly prove a success.

Sir Thomas More had a strong objection to sheep-farms, declaring that the sheep ate up the people. Accordingly, we find that on the Utopian farms tillage was more particularly advanced, and that a great number of chickens were hatched, not in the natural way, but by means of a gentle equal heat; a prophetic vision of the incubator. Although husbandry was a science common to all alike, the people had each their proper handiwork, either cloth-weaving, masonry, smithcraft, or carpentering, for no others to speak of were known. Sir Thomas held the theory that if all persons were made to work, including women and priests, there would be no need that any should labour more than six hours a day. In his sketch of a Utopian day, however, no fewer than nine hours are allotted to work, six in the morning, and three in the afternoon. Two hours are allowed at midday for dinner and rest, one after supper for play, and eight for sleep. The remainder of the day the people might spend as they pleased, though not in riot or sloth, but rather in the study of some branch of science, lectures being given early in the morning that all might attend. One cannot but feel that the Utopian Jack may have been rather a dull boy.

The houses in Amauroth, the capital city, were large and luxurious, with much glass in the windows, and beautiful gardens at the back, but the custom of changing houses by lot once in ten years strikes one as an inconvenient arrangement. The families into which the city was divided messed together in public halls, and the householder was allowed to take anything he wanted from the national store-houses without payment or exchange, a system which must have rendered the business of housekeeping singularly easy and pleasant. The towns were never allowed to increase or decrease in population beyond a certain

limit, the surplus numbers being accommodated in cities founded under Utopian laws in a neighbouring country where there was much waste ground, while in the case of decrease, people were received from that country into Utopia. How extremely useful, from the political economist's point of view, must that country have been, which could supply immigrants, or waste ground for emigrants, just as its neighbour might require!

In order to bring gold and silver into disrepute, the Utopians made felons' chains and base utensils of precious metals, and ate and drank out of earthen vessels. When they found pearls and diamonds they decked their children with them, who, when they grew up, laid them aside of their own accord. When strange Ambassadors visited the country, gorgeous with gold and jewels, the children would dig their mothers in the sides, and say: "Look, mother, how great a lubber doth yet wear pearls and precious stones, as though he were a little child still!"

Whereupon the mother would reply: "Peace, child, I think he be one of the Ambassador's fools."

But the most remarkable feature of Utopian life, and the one most deserving of imitation, was the law which decreed that every man should be free to follow his own religion, whatever it might be, and to bring other men to his way of thinking by peaceable means, but which forbade him to use any violent or seditious modes of conversion. The Utopian priests were distinguished for their holiness, but they were very few in number, though old women and widows were allowed to take orders. The churches were open to all sects alike, and there was nothing denominational in the services.

In Bacon's "New Atlantis," we read but little about the social life of the island of Benzalem, except that the people were virtuous, had large families, and objected to taking bribes. The greater portion of the fragment is devoted to an account of the splendours of Solomon's House, an institution which had been founded in ancient times by a wise and good ruler with the object of gaining "knowledge of causes and secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible." Although the inhabitants of Benzalem in general were forbidden to travel, once in twelve years ships were sent out carrying three of the brethren of Solomon's House, who traded not in gold and silver, but "in God's first creature, which is Light." In other words, they brought home knowledge of the sciences, arts, and inventions of the world, as well as books, instruments, and all kinds of patterns.

During the narrator's stay on the island, one of the fathers of the institution arrived in the capital. Unlike the great men of Utopia, he was dressed in the most elaborate attire, and travelled in a chariot ornamented with the most gorgeous trappings. He was comely in appearance, and had an aspect as if he pitied men. The father gave an account of the foundation to which he belonged, describing how he and his colleagues had made deep caves under the hills to be used as refrigerators, conservatories and the like, and how they had built high towers for taking observations of the snow, rain, and winds. They possessed, moreover, great lakes, both salt and fresh, violent streams and cataracts, artificial wells and baths for the cure of diseases, furnaces of great diversity, large gardens and parks full of birds and beasts to be used for scientific purposes. He alluded, besides, to their medicine-houses, sound-houses, perspective-houses, mathematical-houses, perfume-houses, and houses of deceits of the senses. It is rather tantalising only to read the names of these wonderful establishments, and we cannot but wish that the author had thought fit to enlarge upon his theme, and had explained more fully the scope and arrangements of his ideal College of Natural Science.

Swift, had he been inspired by more love for and faith in his fellow Yahoos, might have given us a magnificent picture of a Happy Land. As it is, although many of the Lilliputian laws were sensible and well-considered, the only really attractive country which Gulliver met with in the course of his travels was the equine paradise of the Houyhnhnms.

Johnson, in his "Rasselas," wrote of the search for happiness, but not of its discovery. In later times, imaginative writers, with a taste for sociology, have often described the benefits that would accrue to a country were it to be governed by a patent system, warranted never to get out of order, of the author's own invention.

The most fashionable form of theoretical government at the present day appears to be a Despotic Democracy. Under this system, individualism of all kinds is carefully stamped out, and men and women

are enlisted in an industrial army, the working and discipline of which are modelled upon that of the German army. The author usually enhances the attractions of his plan by assuring his readers that there will be money enough for every person to enjoy a handsome income, and that the hours of labour, more especially in the less agreeable branches of trade and manufacture, will be extremely short. How this can be managed he proves with, to his own mind, unanswerable logic, but never quite succeeds in convincing the propertied reader.

In an amusing skit on recent works of this class Mr. Jerome has given a description of the condition of this country a hundred years hence, when the Government, he imagines, will be engaged in carrying on an unequal warfare with Nature on account of her anti-Socialistic methods. The people of the twentieth century will all be washed, dressed, and fed by the State, and their hair dyed a uniform brown in order that none may glory in golden locks, while those who are bigger and handsomer than their fellows will be condemned to lose an arm by way of rectifying matters. Yet in spite of all this more than parental care, Nature will constantly vindicate her right to overindulge some of her children, and behave like a cruel stepmother to others.

The weak point of all highly-coloured pictures of an ideal Happy Land seems to lie in their authors' ignorance or forgetfulness of the main elements of human nature. The imaginary rulers are depicted as invariably wise, just, and disinterested; the imaginary people as invariably contented, orderly, and prosperous, with a full appreciation of the excellence of their own laws, and no desire to "better themselves." Under such conditions it is probable that any form of government, from the most despotic down to the most democratic, would answer equally well.

DAVID CROWHURST'S ORDEAL.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VI. A REVELATION.

With poor Elsie's departure all acute or keen suffering died out of David Crowhurst's life. Witnessing her misery had been his deepest distress; the feeling that she was at rest operated like a soothing balm to the wounds whose scars would prove ineffaceable. He was conscious of no positive anguish, only a sense of infinite languor and sadness, a sort of soft and pensive shadow of the pain which had once throbbed so fiercely. The warm affection of the three girls was a constant solace to the man who loved them so devotedly; it reconciled him to the world, and was gradually wafting him into a haven of peace. The chords of woe and apprehension ceasing to vibrate, sank into abeyance. The old troubled look was fading out of the kindly eyes; some invisible hand seemed to be smoothing the deeply graven lines from his brow; he began to realise that this peaceful aftermath might prove fairer than the days of his stormy youth. So the time passed on contentedly until twenty-three years had elapsed since Reuben Raeburn had disappeared.

As David happened to be driving through Streatfield one day, the storekeeper, who also filled the office of postmaster, called out as he passed:

"Wait, Mr. Crowhurst, here's a letter for you; it's been waiting ever so long, but you scarcely ever come into the village, and I had no way of letting you know. Here it is."

David drove on. The ties which bound him to the outer world were so few that he scarcely ever received letters. As he curiously examined the address he was stunned as by a physical blow; a sudden chill smote him, he grew dizzy, and white to the lips.

"I have never seen but one handwriting like that," he murmured, "and that hand must have been still for many a long year."

He drove on steadily and mechanically, but when he had passed some distance beyond the precincts of the village, he stopped, tied his horse to a tree, and passed into the sheltering shade of the woods, still clasping tightly that inoffensive-looking letter, which he regarded with a sort of superstitious horror. He stumbled as he moved, and in the effort to hold himself erect, the grass, and trees, and sky became confused, floating about, coming down as if to crush him. It required a distinct effort of will to enable him to open the envelope, but with his fingers quivering nervously he managed it at last. He read it over and over again in a vain effort to master the contents. It was very simply worded, and to the point. It ran:

"Dear Crowhurst,—I know that poor Elsie has gone, but I should like to see the children before I start on my last journey. They will not even know their father. Everything will be explained when we

meet. Bring them to three hundred and ninety-three, Blank Street, New York. Lose no time, as my hours are numbered. I ask only my just due, and have every confidence that you will recognise compliance with my request as a plain duty.—Yours,

"REUBEN RAEBURN."

Crowhurst started with all the impetuosity of youth. His hot heart blazed with impotent resentment; his blood burned at fever heat; his eyes glowed with sombre fire; his dry, white lips refused to frame the bitter words he wished to utter. David's whole soul rose up in vehement protest. He thought with a strong, silent fury of the man by whose wayward will all these miserable convulsions of existence had been produced. Anger, desolateness, a crushing sense of wrong swept over him like a whirlwind; this tempest of mingled passions shook him to the very depths of his being, and his spirit was divided within him. A cry of exceeding bitterness and wrath escaped his lips.

"Curse him! curse him! curse him! It was all for nothing, Elsie's ruined life and my misery. Oh! God in Heaven! Can such things be allowed?" Then, throwing himself face downwards on the grass, he sobbed aloud, long shuddering sobs which shook his strong frame like a convulsion. There, alone, amidst the silent beauty of the summer's day, David Crowhurst went through the hardest conflict he had ever fought. "Shall I tear this letter up, and never disturb the girls by letting them know anything about it? They are mine, bound to me by every tie of love and protection. He has forfeited his rights, it is I who have filled a father's place. Now, he will take them from me, and how can I live without them? Why should I hesitate? I owe him nothing; he has blackened my whole life. The sacrifice is too great; it is too much to ask of a man. I can't do it—oh! Heaven help me! I can't do it. But, then, is it what Elsie would wish? Have I a right to keep them from their father?"

As he lay there, the remembrance of every separate slight and pang which he had endured returned to him. The horror of the arid, barren years; the burden of the pain he had borne; the loneliness and isolation; all rose in array before him. He recalled the despoiling of Elsie's happiness, the crushing of all germs of faith and hope, of womanly, tender instincts; and through all he could only breathe from the depths of his sorely tried heart: "Heaven help me! Oh, Heaven! do not forsake me!" with a sort of desperate persistence; and with the prayer came help.

The shadows were lengthening, a flood of evening gold crowned the hill crests, as David emerged from that wilderness of temptation. He could not prove faithless; his thoughts were reverent in their trouble, notwithstanding the irrepressible doubt within him. The crisp, green pines were rustling overhead; far back, in the closer-lying woods, the wild birds were calling to each other. The sky was opaline, descending into purest yellow, then fading into a faint visionary blue, just touched with gossamer veils of cloud. As David looked steadily into that evening glow his face was like that of some glorified spirit, who had conquered tribulation, and who through direst travail of the soul had won the way to assured peace.

That night, David Crowhurst, accompanied by Raeburn's three daughters, started for New York. The girls were startled, frightened, and mystified. Their existence had been so secluded, so remote from ordinary interests, that this abrupt change alarmed them. They had retained no remembrance of form or feature of that unknown parent whose mysterious fate had clouded their young lives; they had so long accepted their father's death as an assured fact, that the idea of the lost man's resuscitation agitated far more than it gratified them. A feeling of intense sadness possessed David as the shy, shrinking girls clung trembling to him. The sunshine was about to die off from him, and he was standing in the last rays, trying to make the most of them. He saw his future life, barren and solitary, no longer to be sweetened by the presence of these creatures who had seemed entirely his own.

"I must see him first alone. I've got the lassies to think of, they must be my first care," David decided when they reached New York.

Leaving the girls to rest, he sought out the address given in Raeburn's letter. It was a good boarding-house in a respectable neighbourhood. The room in which the sick man lay was bright and cheerful, as well as comfortably furnished. When Crowhurst's glance fell upon hollow, glittering eyes and shrunken features, all the latent animosity died out of his heart, though he remained staunch to his own view of the obligations he had assumed.

"I must know all about this before I

allow the girls to be worried and upset," he said frankly and resolutely.

"The girls—my children?" questioned Raeburn in genuine and unaffected surprise. The idea that the little helpless children whom he had deserted so many years before should have any right to judge his conduct, never seemed to have occurred to him.

"They are my children," protested David. "For all these years they have had nobody to look to but me, and I am the one who has had their interest at heart. I couldn't protect their mother from you; you worked your wicked will, and I had to look on helplessly, while she bore the consequences. Reuben Raeburn, if it cost your life and mine, I would prevent you from harming my girls," David stoutly maintained.

"What nonsense you are talking!" muttered his companion uneasily. But, sitting there, silent, impassive, inexorable, the farmer was not to be turned from his purpose; he should hear the whole story of Raeburn's life from the moment he had quitted Ingleside, before he would bring the girls to their father.

Raeburn's account of his own proceedings was very simple. He had bitterly resented his own failure to obtain control of his wife's legacy; and his original idea had been to frighten and bring her to terms by a brief, temporary absence. After his conversation with Guthrie on the road, he had hidden behind one of the large gates that stood always open, until he could succeed in stealing away unobserved. He had watched Crowhurst's arrival, and his unreasonable, jealous rage had been increased by the conversation he had overheard. When, with darkness, everything had settled into quiet, he crossed at the back of his own farm, walked all night; at daybreak he crept into a barn, and rested during the day; amidst the obscurity of the following night, he travelled on again. The next morning he reached a distant railway station, where there seemed slight chance of being recognised. For some time he had been preparing for his flight, drawing money from the bank in small sums, and was therefore well provided with funds. During his stay in New York, he happened to go on board an ocean steamer, and prompted by some impulse for which he utterly failed to account, he took passage, intending to return by the next trip. When he arrived on the other side, he chanced to come across a Canadian newspaper containing an account of his own disappearance, and the commotion excited thereby. This was an aspect of the question which he had never considered, and as some idea of the gossip and derision which would greet his reappearance dawned upon his mind, he was appalled by the thought of the ordeal. Pride and shame assured him that he could never endure to find himself an object of ridicule to the whole country-side. While he was still anxiously debating the matter, he was robbed of his purse in the London streets. This loss left him friendless and penniless in the London streets, and his perverse pride prevented him from making known to the wife, whom his chief desire had been to punish and humiliate, his miserable plight. This question settled the matter decisively, and he gave up all thought of returning home. A period of terrible privation followed; there had been times when he had not known where to look for bread, and when it had seemed as though he must perish from actual starvation. Then, a singularly fortunate chance had thrown employment in his way; and, once a solid footing was gained, the sober, thrifty Scotchman had prospered steadily until he found himself a partner in an extensive grain business, in which his practical experience of farming proved an advantage. He would often have sent money to his wife and family, but had feared such an action. He stated with some complacency that he had realised a handsome competency which was willed to his children. He declared that his affection for his family had never known change or diminution. He had never attempted to form other ties, but had remained, to the very end, a stranger among strangers. In the course of the twenty-three years he had come out to Canada three times, had hung about the vicinity of his own home, had watched his wife and children, and had kept himself thoroughly conversant with all his affairs. He confessed that the temptation to return had sometimes been very strong, yet he prided himself upon never having yielded to a desire to swerve from his original determination.

"Reuben Raeburn, your pride and spite have been stronger than your love of wife or children," David exclaimed solemnly, as he recovered from the sort of horrified amazement with which he had listened.

A sudden brightness illuminated the dying man's spectral, hollow eyes.

"Yes, once I determined, I never really faltered, whatever the cost," he returned, with proud satisfaction.

For an instant it seemed to Crowhurst that he looked on Elsie Raeburn's face, first fair and blooming, as he remembered it in early youth; then as the restless, storm-driven woman; and lastly, wan, wasted, and peaceful, as he had seen it in her coffin.

"God forgive you, man, but you are a great sinner," he said brokenly. "You don't even realise the evil your pride has caused. Forgiving you is the hardest work I have ever done in my life."

As for the girls, they were gentle, affectionate creatures, little addicted to analysation of motives or fathoming of characters; they accepted the facts as related by Crowhurst quite simply and naturally. Their father had returned to them, there was no possibility of doubting that fact, and it quite satisfied them. They were very enthusiastic over their new-found parent, idealising his story and his qualities in an unreasoning, feminine fashion which should have been very gratifying to the invalid, though he received it as a matter of course and his just due.

Raeburn could never be brought to see the enormity of his own conduct. He had so long posed in his own sight as a martyr that his mind proved incapable of receiving a fresh impression on the subject. He asserted confidently that though he had suffered deeply, he had stood firm against all the enticements of his own weakness. Never making any question about his own actions, or doubting his own motives, he was sensible of some surprise that they could possibly have been misunderstood. With a not unnatural petulance he pondered a good deal upon what he chose to consider the disadvantages of his lot; taking for granted, with a simplicity and composure which staggered David, that he had been the victim of circumstances, and was entirely deserving of commiseration. He persisted to the end in treating Crowhurst as an outsider, a mere spectator in the tragic drama in which he had himself been the chief actor, and never acknowledged that his wife's cousin had been intimately concerned therewith. Through all the farmer continued patient, though he failed to comprehend a temperament inaccessible to reason and moral force; it was hard for him to believe in a perverse will.

A little relief from suffering, a slight sense of comfort, were sufficient to divert the sick man from serious thought; he was far too deeply concerned about his own sensations and physical ailments to permit his thoughts to dwell much upon his own shortcomings. Reuben Raeburn died without much suffering, but also without any intensification of feeling, or remorse for the harm he had wrought. But when David looked down at the dead face of the man whom he had once so bitterly hated, he prayed from the depths of his strong, faithful, loyal heart:

"Lord, pity him, and put his sins far away from him. Thank God that He had mercy upon me, and helped me to forgive him!"

Now Publishing,

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Being a Complete Story

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

ENTITLED

"TIME'S CUNNING."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

TO BE HAD EVERYWHERE.

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND *is reserved by the Authors.*

Published at the Office, 12, St. Bride St., Ludgate Circus. Printed by F. M. EVANS & Co., Limited, Crystal Palace, S.E.

THE EXTRA

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF

ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

"TIME'S CUNNING,"

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS,

Author of "Cross Currents," "A Mist of Error," "A Valiant Ignorance," "Her Inheritance," "A Mere Cypher," etc., etc.,

AND

MARGARET MOULE,

Author of "The Thirteenth Brydain," "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Benefit of Clergy," "The Vicar's Aunt," etc., etc.,

Joint Authors of "Taken on Trust."

PRICE 6d. — CHRISTMAS, 1894. — PRICE 6d.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	A BEGINNING	1
II.	THE FIRST ARRIVAL	4
III.	FELLOW GUESTS	9
IV.	UNKNOWN GROUND	12
V.	AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS	17
VI.	MISS LUCAS'S STORY	20
VII.	MISS LUCAS GOES ON TO THE END	27
VIII.	COLONEL THURSTAN'S STORY	33
IX.	TAKEN BY SURPRISE	41
X.	RALPH IRELAND'S STORY	44
XI.	MINA'S STORY	51
XII.	IN SPITE OF ALL	56
XIII.	FOR AULD LANG SYNE	59

CHAPTER I. A BEGINNING.

THE dense darkness of a winter's night lay over all the country side. Beneath that still and solemn curtain, which hushes and covers up all those mute evidences of the restless energy of man, which spring up about him wherever his tent is pitched, the landscape lay hidden. All through the night the rain fell with a quiet monotony of sound. But at last it ceased. There was a short interval in which darkness and silence seemed to become one principle; and then—a just perceptible lightening of the darkness rather than a distinct revelation of light—the first grey glimmer of dawn made itself apparent. A little shivering, creaking sound swept through the wintry trees as though life, becoming visible, became audible also; and the light slowly strengthened.

Emerging into ghostly distinctness, the first shape to become definite, as it rose up solid amid the wavering trees, the outlines of a large house loomed through the twilight. The light was coming chill and wan from a lead-coloured sky, and the old red-brick fabric, many-windowed, many-chimneyed, with ivy covering it here and there, stood out against the greyness, dignified, substantial, and sombre.

An air of isolation hung about it. On the side on which the light first fell, no sign of life, no sound or movement followed the late dawn. The borders beneath the windows looked bare, even for winter time; on the broad drive that swept up to the front door were no marks either of wheels or footprints; and on the wide lawn the grass grew long.

It was a house suggestive, in every simple, comfortable line, of happy human life. Nothing about its appearance suggested display. It might have been built two centuries before as the head-quarters from which a troop of boys and girls should go out into the world, to which they should look back from their own homes, later on, with loving gratitude for the happy youth it had sheltered. The fine old house had stood through the darkness of the night, its outline shrouded in the darkness that

enveloped it. It had stood through the past, and the life that had dwelt in it, the dramas, comedies, and tragedies which it had witnessed were wrapped in a deeper darkness still. And for that darkness there was, as yet, no dawn.

The full light of the day, a grey and cheerless light it was, seemed to come suddenly at last; and then the dignified stillness which brooded over the old house was disturbed. At the back of the house the garden adjoined a paddock, beyond which lay farm buildings. A man who had crossed this paddock opened the wicket gate that connected it with the garden, and went on towards the house. There was nothing alien to the desolate quiet of the scene about this one human presence, which suggested intrusion rather than familiarity.

The man opened a glass door which led from the garden into the house, with an assured touch, however, and pausing in a little back hall to take off his hat and coat, walked on with the step of the master. Seen without his overcoat, he was a man above middle height, slightly made. His face was thin and pale, and there was that unmistakeable something about face and bearing that marks the townsman rather than the countryman. His most noticeable characteristic, however, was the expression in his eyes. They were brown, like the hair which was not so plentiful as it had been, though its owner's age could have been little more than five-and-thirty. And they were the eyes of a sympathetic, kindly spectator of human life rather than a sharer in it. There were lines of care about the face, and lines suggestive of ill-health. But they seemed to present themselves rather as accidents; the expression of the humorous and observant eyes utterly ignored them.

He crossed a great hall, strangely suggesting in its bareness and coldness that it should have been a comfortably appointed "house place," and entered a room at the further side.

It was a large room, and it was very solidly and substantially furnished as far as the bare necessaries of a dining-room are concerned. At one end was a great sideboard; facing it, at the other end, was a massive dinner-waggon. The centre of the room was occupied by a dining-table at which twelve people could easily have been accommodated, and heavy dining-room chairs stood against the walls. The wide hearth was proportioned to the size of the room, and the three long windows which faced the door had each their pair of crimson velvet curtains. But on this foundation the poorest possible superstructure was raised. Sideboard and dinner-waggon were absolutely bare; a small tablecloth laid at one end of the table had a humiliated appearance, as though it were ashamed of the modest tea equipage for two, the piece of cold bacon, the loaf and the butter set forth upon it. A fire which did no credit to the grate was sparkling timidly on the tiles.

Standing before the fire, with one foot on the fender, was a little woman, who looked as much out of keeping with her surroundings as did the breakfast and the fire, though no consciousness of the fact appeared in her demeanour. She was very slightly made, and something about the alert face, intent upon the perusal of a letter that she held in her hand, seemed to indicate that her natural tendency to spareness had been accentuated by a life of care and over-work. The black eyes were sharp and anxious, and there were lines in the forehead which were out of proportion to the still youthful figure. The soft, wavy black hair was brushed back from her face and twisted into the ugly knob which women only achieve when the worries of life have obliterated their sense of the becoming. She was dressed in a shabby black gown, neat at every point, and almost equally thread-bare. She started as the door opened, and folded the letter, turning with a quick, brisk movement. There was a flush on her cheeks as of excitement, or even triumph.

"Are you wet, Stafford?" she said. "Did you wipe your boots? How's the cow?"

She seated herself before the teapot as she spoke, laying her letter, with two or three more, beside her, and her husband stood before the fire.

"I did wipe my boots, Kit," he said. He spoke in a pleasant, leisurely way, which bore out the impression of impersonal interest in life conveyed by his face. "The cow, I am sorry to say, is dead."

The composure with which he announced the fact was in striking contrast with his wife's reception of it. The lines of care deepened suddenly all over her face until it looked quite haggard.

"Dead!" she said. "Oh, Stafford! Five-and-twenty pounds!" She paused, and then continued as she poured out a cup of tea: "It's Peter's fault, I'm sure! I don't believe she ought to have died at all!

I don't believe he knows anything about cows."

Her husband seated imself and drew the bread towards him.

"I don't think he does," he said quietly. "But then, you see, Kit, neither do I."

There was a moment's pause, during which Mrs. Ray contemplated her husband, as he applied himself to his breakfast, with a certain irritation in her expression mingled with an oddly tender concern. Then she glanced at the letters by her side.

"That makes it the more certain," she said, "that we must make some money somehow. There's no doubt about that!"

There was a note of triumphant anticipation in her voice. But her husband did not appear to notice it.

"There's no doubt of the necessity," he returned. "The possibility is the point. I should be very pleased to set about it, Kit, if you'll show me how."

Mrs. Ray leant back in her chair with a movement of irrepressible pride.

"I have!" she cried. "That is just exactly the very thing I have done. Read that, and that, and that!" She made a hasty selection among her letters, and handed him four sheets of letter-paper. Then, as he received them with an odd glance at her, she added in the tone of one who revels in the anticipated hearing, "Read them aloud!"

"DEAR MADAM,—I have seen your advertisement and it will give me much pleasure to avail myself of the opportunity you offer. I should propose to become your guest on the terms you name from December the twentieth until the following Saturday week. I enclose references according to your request, and beg to remain, faithfully yours, "ANNE LUCAS."

Stafford Ray read the letter through quietly, and then turned to his wife with an expression of blank incomprehension.

"It's a very courteous letter," he said; "and what does it mean?"

"Read the rest!"

He took up the next, a square sheet, bearing a strong handwriting.

"DEAR MADAM,—Having seen your advertisement of the twenty-eighth instant, I beg to inform you that I desire to avail myself of your hospitality, on the terms you name—five guineas a week—for one week, dating from December twentieth. Enclosed please find references. I shall, doubtless, be favoured with those you offer. Yours truly, "JOHN THURSTAN."

Stafford Ray took up the two remaining sheets, one in either hand, and read on.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have seen your advertisement with reference to the Christmas holidays. I should very much like to be your guest for a week or ten days. I should like to come on the twenty-first of December. I enclose my references. I am sorry to trouble you for those you offer, but I shall be grateful if you will oblige me with them. Sincerely yours,

"MINA CHESTER."

"DEAR MADAM,—If you can take me in from December the twenty-first to January the sixth, I shall be glad to come to you. Kindly let me know particulars as to the shooting. References enclosed. Faithfully yours, "RALPH IRELAND."

Stafford Ray folded the letters deliberately together and looked at his wife.

"Are many more ladies and gentlemen thirsting for the honour of our acquaintance?" he enquired. "This is almost what one might call waking to find oneself famous."

The serene gravity of his tone did not conceal its ironical humour, and Mrs. Ray flushed.

"Don't be foolish, Stafford," she said. "I've no doubt there will be plenty more. But this is enough for a beginning."

"Yes," assented her husband. "But of what is it the beginning?"

His wife surveyed him with an expression of conscious pride.

"They are paying guests," she announced. "Stafford, you don't mean to say you'd forgotten? I told you a month ago that I'd read a suggestion in one of the ladies' papers about them. It said that there must be a great many people who would like to see family life in the country, and a great many people with country houses who might add to their incomes by inviting guests of this kind. I told you all about it, and I said what a capital time Christmas would be for the purpose; so many people don't know anything about Christmas in the country."

"So many people don't want to," interposed her husband.

"That's a great mistake," she continued triumphantly. "You see, there are people only too glad of the opportunity. I advertised, as you see in——"

"How did you describe the position?" interrupted her husband. There was an odd tenderness in his eyes as they regarded

her, but his brows were drawn sharply together. "Did you say that a husband and wife, inhabiting a large house which they were unable to keep up, would be glad of help in the farm work, etc., and would have pleasure in sharing the humblest possible fare with their assistants?"

"No, Stafford, I didn't." Mrs. Ray spoke with perhaps excessive firmness. "I said that a lady and gentleman living in a fine old house in a picturesque part of England would be glad to receive as guests two or three ladies and gentlemen, desirous of becoming acquainted with the country customs of the Christmas season. And I said that a nominal charge of five guineas a week would be made. Oh, Stafford!" Mrs. Ray rose suddenly and her voice shook in its deprecating eagerness; "there wasn't anything untrue in it, there really wasn't! I shall have Mrs. Jones in from the village to help Sarah, and I'll make it all as comfortable as possible! It's only for a fortnight, and we can have snapdragon and a Yule log, and put up holly and things, and I'm sure Mr. Lloyd will let us take them to the school treat, and oh, it will bring in something at any rate!"

Her husband looked up into her face with his own very pitiful.

"Kitty," he said, "my poor little Kit, it won't answer. You can't make it like the real thing. And the people themselves can't be the real thing either, don't you see, or they wouldn't want to come. My dear, it won't do."

"It shall do!" she returned vehemently. "I'll make it do. They've answered now, and we must try, at any rate. Oh, Stafford, you will help me, won't you?"

Stafford Ray rose and put one hand gently on her shoulder.

"I believe we should help one another best, Kitty," he said slowly, "if we could face the fact that our being here at all is a failure. We stave it off from month to month, but we shall have to give it up."

With a sudden movement, very unlike her usual quickness, his wife pressed close against him, every line of her face quivering as with a sudden shock of terrible anticipation.

"No!" she cried passionately. "You shan't go back, Stafford, you shan't! you shan't!"

CHAPTER II. THE FIRST ARRIVAL.

THE unexpected inheritance of a fine old country place looks at the outset like a stroke of unalloyed good fortune. When the inheritor happens to be a man whom a course of unremunerative toil in a manufacturing city has brought to a state of health in which town life means certain death, the providential character of the gift seems hardly measureable.

There are, unfortunately, two sides from which every position is to be regarded. Stafford Ray had inherited the estate of High Firs in Cheshire, some twelve months before, as heir-at-law of a relative whose face he had never beheld. This gentleman, whose occupations had been of a speculative nature, had himself bought High Firs, fired with a desire to become a country gentleman, on an occasion when fortune had smiled upon him conspicuously. Fortune apparently had disapproved of this ambition, for she never smiled again; and when her dévotee died, he left nothing, except the place in Cheshire, for the disposal of which he had not considered it worth while to arrange by will.

Stafford Ray was a man to whom life had denied those opportunities for the developement of which his best parts seemed to have been created. For the finer qualities of his nature, there was no use in the sphere in which his lot was cast. He never realised the fact; perhaps a touch of indolence in his temperament increased his tendency to take things as they came. He simply sat rather loosely to life, doing his work well; bearing his burdens courageously; but taking no vivid interest in the matter. He had married young, a wife who was his very antithesis. The first years of their married life had been comfortable and uneventful. Then the shadow of ill-health fell on their home. Stafford Ray broke down again and again. He had to give up the position he had held in a large firm of solicitors. And his struggle with lighter work resulted at last in a serious illness, which brought upon him a medical verdict to the effect that in country life lay his only chance of health.

It was at this moment that he came into possession of High Firs. The first idea was, of course, that he should let the place, but unsuccessful efforts in that direction had already been in progress for nearly two years when it came to him. Urged by the eagerness of his wife, and by his own inability to see any other course open to him, he decided to try the experiment of living on his estate, and making an income by farming the land. As far as health was concerned, the experi-

ment had proved brilliantly successful. The husband and wife had taken possession in March, and during the spring and summer that ensued, Stafford Ray had grown stronger week by week. But farming is a pursuit to which only the ignorant apply themselves without capital; and against ignorance and want of ready money, all the perseverance in the world avails, in this line of life, nothing. Stafford Ray made mistakes, did his best to rectify them, worked early and late, and accepted the total absence of results with composure. His wife toiled and managed, keeping the small household together she herself alone could have told how. And it was not until the winter months brought with them slowly, but surely, the certainty that the experiment was a failure, that her spirits grew sharp, and her face haggard with care.

It mattered not at all to Catherine Ray with how hard a struggle she made her two ends meet; if only she could see her husband strong and well. It was the dread of finding herself at last without resource against that return to town life which had become the bugbear of her existence, that strained her courage almost beyond endurance. If they should have to leave High Firs, no possible means of subsistence offered itself but a return to some form or other of the work to which Stafford Ray had been trained. And every fibre in the resolute little woman was accordingly set and braced to fight the battle to the last, to leave no stone unturned by which the barest living might be wrested from their present surroundings.

The sword that hung over the husband and wife; which had for the first time received definite shape in the words with which Stafford Ray had passed from the discussion of the new means of money-making concocted by Catherine's desperately eager brain; was not again alluded to by either of the pair. But, as though the thoughts of both needed active occupation, the subject of the expected guests became all dominating as Mrs. Ray flung herself into the preparations for their reception. The crowds of applicants which had loomed before the hostess's eager vision, when she received the first answers to her advertisement, did not take upon themselves substantial form. The four letters that she had received together, were the only ones that came, and four people only were expected.

"And if four people involve such an expenditure of energy," said Stafford Ray, one day, "what would have become of us if fourteen people had responded to your expansive overtures?"

He was standing in the doorway of the large drawing-room as he spoke, looking down upon his wife as she struggled with a billowy mass of old-fashioned chintz with which she proposed to clothe the dilapidated furniture ranged about her. The "plenishing" of High Firs was of a rather erratic description. The possessor from whom Stafford Ray had inherited the house, had bought with it a considerable quantity of its furniture from the original owner. A great deal of this had been sold before the Rays came into possession, and a great ransacking of the premises had taken place before any possibility of furnishing the drawing-room at all had presented itself.

"I have made one discovery for the benefit of the trusting four, however," Stafford Ray continued. "The wine-cellar isn't absolutely cleared out, after all. There's no variety, but as far as sherry goes, the lodgers will be all right."

"That's a comfort," responded his wife, with preoccupied fervour. "If it wasn't for Mrs. Jones, we really should do beautifully. She says she can't go about the house without her bonnet, because she never has. And superior servants never wear bonnets in the house!"

"Then, as people in our exalted position wouldn't be likely to keep inferior servants, we must be supposed to indulge in an eccentric treasure. She is a treasure, you know. You've often said so."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Ray dubiously. "She really can cook; and I shall see after everything myself. There's next to nothing to do about the farm just now, and you'll be able to look after the men all the time. And I expect the two ladies will amuse one another."

"I don't think they are likely to want for amusement," returned her husband. "They're going to have an experience quite unique in its way. And I shouldn't be surprised if our experience was equally striking."

But if he allowed himself an occasional sarcastic anticipation, Stafford Ray submitted to the inevitable, as he had done throughout his life, and set himself to further his wife's wishes wherever his man's strength and capacity could be of service. He laughed at the fair show of order into which he contrived to bring the garden and lawns, calling it a "fraud of the first water." The triumphs of carpentering with which he

supplemented the deficiencies of the fine old bedrooms, were the objects of his most ironical observations. He never told his wife by what transaction in live-stock he stocked the store cupboard and larder.

"And really," said Mrs. Ray, when the long-expected twentieth of December came at last, "things don't look so bad, now, do they, Stafford?"

It was half-past two in the afternoon, and they were standing together in the great hall before a blazing fire. The hall was bare no longer. A heavy curtain shut off the front door and effectually excluded all draughts. Infinite contrivance had produced short window curtains of the same dark stuff, and bright cushions lay on the broad, low window seat. A quaint round table, daintily laid for five o'clock tea, stood near the foot of the staircase. Mrs. Ray herself was as much brightened in appearance as was her hall. After much careful inspection of the three shabby little gowns that constituted her wardrobe, she had decided that a new dress was an imperative necessity of the situation. She had made it herself with much care and flutter of spirits; and the fact that she was thus wearing new attire for the first time for nearly three years, added to the excitement and satisfaction with which her eyes sparkled. So unusual a state of things, however, had made her a little nervous, and there was something agitated and appealing in her eyes as she turned them at last to her husband. He smiled at her reassuringly.

"It looks capital, little woman," he said. "I hardly know the place. Now then, let's rehearse the programme. Miss Lucas's train is due at three-ten. The station fly is to meet her, and she'll be here by four o'clock. Colonel Thurstan arrives at Newton"—Newton was the market town some seven miles distant—"at four-fifty; and I'm to be off now, execute a list of commissions, meet him, and bring him back. That's all, I think?"

"That's all," she assented absently. "Stafford, you don't think the ottoman under the drawing-room window will give way when it's sat upon, do you?"

"I'm quite sure nothing will give way," he said, patting her on the shoulder. "Kit," he continued, with a slight smile, glancing round the old hall as he spoke, "I wonder what the old house thinks of it? The gentleman up there would have been rather surprised at the use to which his house would be put if he could have known it, wouldn't he?"

He pointed as he spoke to the portrait of a man in the dress of two hundred years ago, which was painted on a panel over the fireplace. It was the portrait of the man by whom the house had been built—a certain Gervase Woodroffe—by whose descendants the place had only been sold about twelve years before. It was a poor painting enough, but there was character of a spirited kind about the face represented, nevertheless. And Stafford Ray's eyes were somewhat in the habit of wandering to it. Mrs. Ray, however, was not imaginative, and she answered rather crisply:

"It's a very good use, I'm sure," she said. "I don't see why any one should be surprised. Stafford, don't you think you ought to start?"

Her impatience for his departure was the result solely of nervousness. And when her husband had driven off, a very unusual fever of the spirits took possession of Mrs. Ray. It was quite unlike her to distress herself with possible agitating contingencies. But, through the work and thought that she had expended on the scheme which was now to become an accomplished fact, it had gradually assumed to her proportions of almost overwhelming magnitude. The innumerable devices by which the poverty that reigned at High Firs was to be concealed, the innocent little deceptions which were to create a genial air of ease and festivity, were not a point of personal pride only with her. It seemed to her that on them Stafford's whole future life was to turn. And as the hour drew near that was to put them to the test, they rose before her, a glaring regiment of failures. There was nothing more that she could do; everything was as ready as her hands could make it; and her quick, nervous progress from room to room afforded her no occupation. Her thoughts began to busy themselves with the formidable arrival that every moment was bringing nearer. And the dreadful possibility that Miss Lucas might be "very particular" or very prim, assumed for her the complexion of a certainty. She was giving a last dissatisfied glance at Miss Lucas's bedroom, when she heard the lumbering approach of the fly, and hastened downstairs, outwardly alert and composed, but with her heart beating with painful rapidity.

She had just reached the foot of the stairs and was looking towards the door, opened by the stalwart village girl whose services were to be supplemented by Mrs.

Jones, when a woman's figure appeared on the threshold and came towards her with a swift step.

"Mrs. Ray?" said the first of her four guests. "I am delighted to make your acquaintance! How fortunate I am to have so fine a day."

There was no single point about the newcomer which touched any one of the preconceived notions that her hostess had formed of Miss Lucas. She was not old—not more than middle-aged; she was very handsome, and she was far from prim. These bare facts alone impressed themselves instantly on Mrs. Ray's brain, and somewhat confused her greeting.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Lucas," she said. "It is warm, isn't it? Won't you come to the fire?"

But Miss Lucas did not seem to notice any want of self-possession about her hostess. She had not glanced about her as she entered the hall, and the fact that she kept her eyes from wandering from Mrs. Ray's face seemed to be due to a certain effort of self-control. She moved towards the fire, leaving her luggage to its fate with the carelessness of a woman accustomed to be waited on. Mrs. Ray, however, was unable to share her guest's confidence in the powers of the driver of the station fly. With a hurried little "Excuse me," she went out to emphasize her directions as to back door and back stairs, leaving her guest alone in the old hall.

Miss Lucas did not avail herself of her moment's solitude for any inspection of her surroundings. On the contrary, she stretched out one hand with an odd certainty of movement, and resting it on the high, narrow mantelpiece, pressed her face for a moment against her arm. Then, as the sound of footsteps caught her ear, she drew herself up and stood facing the door as Mrs. Ray came round the curtains into the hall.

She was a tall woman, and so well proportioned, so graceful and self-possessed, that poor little Mrs. Ray suddenly became conscious of all the innocent little shifts arranged for her deception as something absolutely criminal. Her features were irregular, and the complexion of youth was gone. But nose, brow, and chin were alike charming in their way; strong, sensitive, and sympathetic. She had large, dark blue eyes, and a certain wistfulness which, mingled with their shrewd humour, seemed rather inconsistent with the lines that time had traced about them—lines of laughter rather than pain. She had magnificent auburn hair, soft tendrils of which curled about her temples, and her whole appearance was instinct with vitality, physical and mental. Even the movements with which she unloosed the beautiful furs she wore spoke of impulse and possibly of self-will. She scanned Mrs. Ray as the latter approached her with a keen glance, and then her lips and eyes smiled pleasantly.

"Arrivals are always a nuisance, are they not?" she said. "But don't let me be more trouble to you than you can help. One doesn't expect things to go by machinery in the country; one has enough of that in town."

A vague possibility suddenly dawned in Mrs. Ray that the instability of the ottoman in the drawing-room was of no great consequence after all. Something also suggested to her for the first time that it was not unpleasant to see somebody strange. The thought gave to her manner a pretty touch of genuine, unconscious hospitality as she approached the tea-table, and said gratefully:

"It's very kind of you to say that! You'll have some tea, won't you? It's refreshing after a journey."

"I am used to travelling," returned her guest, "I like it. But a cup of tea will be delightful. You are not such a gadabout as I am, perhaps?"

Mrs. Ray shook her head.

"I've not travelled at all," she said. "We talked of going to the Rhine five years ago—it was all settled; but then my husband was ill, and we couldn't."

"You look upon it as only put off, though," said Miss Lucas pleasantly. Her blue eyes were covertly observant of the little thin, hardworked hands so busy with the teapot. "Just as I am always putting off the time when I shall settle in England for good. It's a good thing to have something to look forward to!"

She laughed, and the musical sound was infectious, though Mrs. Ray shook her head as she echoed it.

"I don't know," she said. "I think sometimes that we shall never go. Won't you have some cake, Miss Lucas?"

The duty of making conversation had been quite forgotten by Mrs. Ray, and she had been speaking easily and spontaneously. But the attitude of hostess involved in handing her guest tea, apparently brought back a sense of the exigencies of the situation, and a moment's pause ensued. Miss Lucas made no attempt

to break it. A little shadow as of preoccupation seemed to have fallen upon her. She drank her tea abstractedly, and Mrs. Ray realised that it behoved her to speak. The sense of duty engendered a rather stiff little manner.

"Country life is quite new to you, I suppose," she said. "Very few people know how pleasant the country is in the winter, I think. We quite hoped last week for some old-fashioned Christmas weather, but unfortunately it has turned quite mild again."

There was a touch of apology in her voice, and it seemed to rouse Miss Lucas, whose eyes twinkled a little as she said: "Thank you, I prefer mild weather."

"I think you will admire the house," said Mrs. Ray, acting up to her part, as she conceived it. "This old hall, for instance, some people consider very fine."

As though in response to the tacit demand thus made on her, Miss Lucas turned for the first time, and looked round. She made no comment. Even when her gaze had travelled lingeringly round from the portrait over the mantelpiece back to the fire, there was a perceptible pause before she spoke. Then she said briefly:

"It is very pretty."

Mrs. Ray was conscious of a chill. The hall was one of the most characteristic parts of the house. Her hostess-like manner became stiffer and more diffident.

"You will like to hear about our party," she said.

Miss Lucas turned towards her quickly.

"Have you other guests?" she said.

Mrs. Ray drew herself up. "Certainly," she said. "My husband and I being, as you know, alone here, could hardly offer you the advantages of family life unassisted. We are expecting three other guests."

Miss Lucas looked back again at the fire. "Ah, yes," she said, "quite so. And when do my fellow guests arrive?"

"Two of them arrive to-morrow," answered her hostess. "My husband has now driven in to our market-town, at which the express stops, to fetch Colonel Thurstan."

"To fetch——"

With an incredibly abrupt movement, Miss Lucas had turned her head and was looking full into Mrs. Ray's face. She paused a moment, the colour that had retreated from her face came gradually back to it, as she stretched out one hand to serve as a fire-screen for her face.

"Whom did you say you expected?" she asked.

"Colonel Thurstan," repeated Mrs. Ray very distinctly. "His train is just due," she added, glancing at the clock.

"Colonel Thurstan?" repeated Miss Lucas in an odd tone, "ah!"

She paused, and then said: "I knew some Thurstans once. Do you happen to know his Christian name or his regiment?"

"I don't know his regiment," said Mrs. Ray. Something in her guest's demeanour brought a touch of surprise into her voice. "But his Christian name is John."

"Ah."

It was hardly more than a sharply-caught breath, but it bewildered Mrs. Ray. She could think of nothing to say for a moment or two.

"Colonel Thurstan is a friend of yours, I suppose?"

The words, rather strangely spoken, restored Mrs. Ray to ground that she understood.

"As you yourself are a friend of ours," she said politely. "I have still Colonel Thurstan's acquaintance to make. Would you like to go to your room?"

The last words were induced by the fact that Miss Lucas had risen suddenly from her chair. She started slightly as Mrs. Ray paused for her reply, and apparently gathered the sense of the words with some difficulty.

"Thanks," she said, "I think I should."

None of the little difficulties that Mrs. Ray had foreseen in the introduction of her guest to the room prepared for her took place. The hostess found herself, indeed, thinking that her guest might with advantage take a little more notice of the arrangements made for her comfort. Miss Lucas asked only one question—as to the hour of dinner; and then Mrs. Ray was obliged to leave her.

"Won't she come down again till dinner-time, I wonder?" thought the latter. "Well, it gives me nice time in the kitchen, but it's a little dull. I wish Stafford would make haste with Colonel Thurstan. I suppose he's not the man she thought he might be, as she didn't say any more. I wish they'd come."

Colonel Thurstan's train was obviously very late, however, and by the time her male guest arrived under her husband's escort, all Mrs. Ray's energies were concentrated on reconciling the incompatible necessities of superintending the dishing-up of the dinner in the kitchen, and awaiting its announcement in the drawing-room.

Stafford Ray was in the drawing-room

when she appeared, a little flushed and breathless, on the very stroke of the dinner-hour. Stafford had introduced himself to Miss Lucas when she appeared, five minutes earlier, and was finding her a little absent and difficult to talk to. Colonel Thurstan had not yet come down.

"Thurstan assured me that he would not keep us waiting," said Stafford Ray; "but I hope Miss Lucas will forgive me when I say that I told him not to hurry."

But Miss Lucas did not appear to hear the words. She had turned her head abruptly, and seemed to be listening. The next instant the door opened, and a tall, thin man, clean-shaven and with grey hair, came down the room towards them. His host and hostess moved with one consent to meet him.

"Let me introduce you to my wife," said Stafford Ray courteously.

They shook hands, a grave apology and a quick disclaimer passed between them, and then Mrs. Ray turned. Miss Lucas was standing in shadow with her back towards them.

"Miss Lucas, may I introduce Colonel Thurstan?"

At the first word, the soldierly-looking figure had started slightly, and followed the direction of his hostess's eyes with a keen glance.

Miss Lucas turned slowly, almost reluctantly, and a sharp exclamation, incredulous, almost incoherent, broke from her fellow guest. With her head erect, her dark blue eyes burning strangely, and her very lips pale, Miss Lucas came forward.

"Colonel Thurstan and I are old acquaintances," she said icily.

CHAPTER III. FELLOW GUESTS.

"WELL, Stafford?"

"Well, Kit?"

The voice came through the open doorway from Stafford Ray's dressing-room, towards which his wife had turned, as she stood brushing her hair before the place where her looking-glass would have stood save for the fact that it was temporarily ensconced in Miss Lucas's apartment. The first evening was over; and host, hostess, and guests had retired to their rooms. Mrs. Ray placed her brush upon her table with a vindictive bang.

"I think you might say more than that, Stafford," she said.

"I think we've had a truly delightful evening."

"It's all gone off very well," she retorted defiantly. "I'm sure the dinner was beautiful! And if Martha did make one or two mistakes, neither of them seemed to notice; and the drawing-room looked as nice as possible."

"It looked most cheerful."

The quiet assent was almost sardonic, and Mrs. Ray faced round suddenly.

"Stafford," she said, "don't be so horrid! You might tell me what was the matter! Oh, and everything did go off so well, too!"

Her face was flushed, there were actually tears in her eyes, and the tremble in her voice brought her husband quickly to the dressing-room door.

"Nothing could have been better, Kitty," he said. "It's an unexpected hitch that has thrown things out."

"One couldn't foresee that they would know one another before and dislike one another!" she said piteously.

"No," assented Stafford. "But it's rather a drag on Christmas festivity, isn't it?"

"They don't seem able to speak to one another," said Mrs. Ray ruefully. "They don't even look at one another! Perhaps its only the first shock, though, Stafford. And I'm sure it must be his fault. She's so nice. She was as friendly as possible till she heard he was coming. Oh, why couldn't he be somebody else?"

Her husband wrinkled up his forehead thoughtfully.

"I don't know about that," he said. "He struck me as being an uncommonly good sort of fellow. I don't know when I've taken to a man so much. I assure you, I had half a notion that your plan wasn't such a bad one by the time I'd driven him home. No; it's her fault, Kit, I've no doubt."

"Perhaps one of them will go away," suggested his wife despairingly. "Oh, wouldn't that be dreadful, Stafford?"

"It may be more dreadful if they both stay," he said. "But things may look better in the morning. Hope for the best, little woman."

Mrs. Ray's fears as to the possible departure of one, at least, of her guests would have been relieved if she could have heard the half audible words which were at that very moment issuing from Miss Lucas's lips.

"It's for him to go away, not for me. He can do as he likes, of course. I shall stay! I shall stay! I shall stay!"

Though more than an hour had elapsed since she had shut the door of her room, Miss Lucas had made no change in her dress. She was pacing rapidly up and down, her hands clenched, her eyes flashing, as if under the influence of some strong excitement. She stopped abruptly, as though the sound of her own voice on the silence had arrested the current of her thoughts. Then with a fresh impulse, she went to the window and drew up the blind. The moon was going down, but there was light enough to show the grounds over which the window looked, and Miss Lucas stood there gazing out. Her face was very strange to see. Her eyes were not the eyes of a woman who is receiving new impressions, but of one who is carried by what she sees back into the past. And across the retrospective background thus created, wildly incongruous passions struggled; yearning regret, passionate tenderness, passionate anger, and a strange questioning which seemed to pervade them all.

Moments passed, and still she stood there. At last she dashed down the blind and turned away. She threw herself on her knees, and her whole figure was shaken from head to foot.

"Oh, Gervase!" she cried, below her breath. "My poor Gervase! My poor Gervase!"

There was no sign of tempest, however, about Miss Lucas's manner when she came down to breakfast on the following morning. The charm of manner which had attracted Mrs. Ray on her arrival was in full force; a little impulsive, perhaps, but quite irresistible to the anxious little hostess. The fact that she entirely ignored the presence of her fellow guest rendered it inevitable that her host should devote himself to the latter, who would otherwise have eaten his breakfast in absolute silence. It was a pouring wet morning, and the prospect looked cheerless to both husband and wife, when Stafford Ray, breakfast being over, said to Colonel Thurstan:

"I am exceedingly sorry, but I have to be out all day. I am obliged to go on business to a village about ten miles off. I had intended to suggest that you might like the drive, but, of course, that's out of the question, under these circumstances."

For a moment Colonel Thurstan hesitated, then he said, quietly:

"Thanks, don't trouble about me; I have some letters to write, and I shall employ myself easily."

His voice and manner as he spoke, though they were grave—far graver, as Stafford Ray knew, than his demeanour had been during the drive on the previous day—were very pleasant. His face was pleasant, too; the thin features were well-cut and noticeably honest in expression. He had brown eyes, clear and straightforward, though always a little sad. And Mrs. Ray, meeting them as he looked towards her, thought to herself that he really looked very nice if only he had not been so tiresome as to have known Miss Lucas before.

Miss Lucas herself turned to her hostess.

"May I ensconce myself in the drawing-room?" she said, with a smile that made Mrs. Ray think entertaining people the easiest pursuit in the world. "I armed myself against wet days with a large piece of embroidery that is some day to be a fire-screen. And you have things to attend to, of course."

It was a very beautiful piece of needlework with which Miss Lucas seated herself alone in the drawing-room; and the careless skill with which she proceeded with it, harmonising with a certain rich picturesqueness that characterised her dress, suggested an artistic temperament. But her industry that morning seemed to be rather a pose. She worked fitfully for about an hour, and then she rose, and began to wander about the room. She was standing by the window watching the rain, when the door opened and she turned with a start. It was Colonel Thurstan, and as he shut the door and advanced into the room, she turned her back upon him deliberately, and sat down to her embroidery frame. Colonel Thurstan walked to a table that stood in one of the windows and took up a book.

Five minutes passed; the fire crackled, Miss Lucas's needle clicked with monotonous regularity as it passed to and fro; and Colonel Thurstan turned page after page. His book was upside down, but the sad brown eyes that rested on it were obviously unaware of the fact. His mouth was resolutely set. Another five minutes passed. The regular click of Miss Lucas's needle was suspended. She had lifted her eyes, unconsciously as it seemed, and they were resting on the thin figure sharply outlined against the blurred window-frame, with that questioning of the night before strong in them. Then they flashed fiercely, and she bent her head again.

"You are living in Rome, I understand."

Colonel Thurstan did not lift his eyes from his book as he spoke. For an instant it was obviously doubtful whether or no Miss Lucas would answer. Then she said with freezing conciseness:

"I am living in Rome."

The conversation thus opened did not flourish. There was another silence, and again Miss Lucas looked up at her fellow guest.

"Have you been ill?" she said brusquely.

"No, thank you," he responded coldly. Then he closed his book suddenly, laid it on the table, and came towards her.

"Anne," he said, "we meet most unexpectedly, and through no wish of our own. But we meet for the first time for fifteen years. And the common questions and answers used by the merest chance acquaintances may surely pass between us. Tell me something of yourself."

She did not speak for a moment, but her needle was making vague tracings on the soft satin.

"What is there to tell?" she said. Her voice was cold still, but much less certain. "My life is the life of dozens of other women. I paint a little, interfere with other people's business a little, and amuse myself a great deal."

"Have you been in England for long?"

"Two months," she answered. She paused, and then said slowly: "Your life is likely to have been more eventful than mine. Are you still in India?"

"No," he answered. "I have been obliged to come home."

"The climate?" she said. She looked up as she spoke, and he bent his head. "Otherwise you have done well, I believe?"

"Yes," he said indifferently.

There was another silence, and Colonel Thurstan sat down in a low chair facing her, fixing his eyes on the ground.

"Why have you come here, Anne?" he said.

The words were spoken very gently, and they seemed to penetrate the armour in which Miss Lucas had entrenched herself, and to touch something within. She did not answer for a moment. Her face had flushed, and the curl of her sensitive lips was softened.

"I don't know," she said. "A whim, I suppose. I saw the advertisement—by chance of course—and I felt that I must see it all again. Why are you here?"

"For auld lang syne," he said, in a low voice.

He rose and walked away to the window, standing with his back to her for a moment. Then he turned and looked round the room with a sad smile.

"Poor old place," he said, "how changed it is!"

There was a suspicious tremble in the little laugh with which Miss Lucas prefaced her answer.

"I was prepared for makeshifts," she said. "Old Mr. Smith found out about these people for me, when it came into my head to come. Poor souls, what a struggle it is! And what a plucky little body she is!"

But the man's sympathies were less quick than the woman's. And Colonel Thurstan was not capable at that moment of interest in the Rays.

"Yes," he said absently. Then he added gently: "Isn't it more than you can bear?"

She laughed again a little bitterly.

"Oh, no!" she said. "People of my age can bear a good deal. Practice, I suppose. One doesn't go in for strong feelings after thirty."

The contrast between the words and the emotional face of the speaker would have had a humorous aspect for any one with leisure to observe it. But Colonel Thurstan was not at leisure. He was evidently thinking, painfully. And when he spoke again it was in a low, hesitating voice.

"Anne," he said, "I've heard nothing for five years. Is there any news?"

She lifted her head sharply; a strange wave of feeling seemed to pass over her face and press out all the softer expression. Her voice rang hard as she said:

"What do you mean?"

"News of Gervase?"

The thread snapped short in Miss Lucas's hand. Her face had paled to the lips, and her eyes flashed with vindictive passion.

"Thank you," she said in a ringing voice, "you've brought me to my senses. Is it possible that I've allowed myself to talk to you—actually talk to you as though there were nothing between us! News of Gervase will never come now. Only, because I have lost him so long, I know he must be dead. Oh, Gervase!"

She stopped abruptly, but the emotion with which she was struggling seemed only to feed her fiery indignation. And she went on again almost instantly.

"That you and I should be in this house together," she said, "is an impossibility. An impossibility, I say! I leave

it to such good feeling as you possess to take you away. You will see that your presence is intolerable to me; that it makes what might have been a sad pleasure into a horrible mockery. You will go away at once!"

But as though the peremptoriness of her tone; or something deeper still that lay within her words; had stung him to the quick, Colonel Thurstan faced her, his face very pale, his steady eyes burning.

"No," he said, "I will not go. There is neither right nor justice in your treatment of me, Anne; as I said it when we parted I say it now. That which stands between us is the figment of your brain. The memories with which this house is haunted are common to us both—I claim my share of them. I will not go!"

"You will not!" Miss Lucas rose impetuously to her feet. "You will stay here, though your presence is hateful to me?"

"I have done nothing, nothing in all the many years we have known each other, to render it hateful to you," he retorted doggedly. "I will not go!"

What Miss Lucas might have said was never to be known. As they stood there facing one another, at the very crisis of their altercation, there was a stir in the hall outside, and a confusion of voices, and the door was flung open.

Two people, a young man and a girl, came into the room, and behind them, unspeakably perturbed, was Mrs. Ray.

"I am so sorry," she was saying, addressing the new-comers alternately collectively and individually. "So terribly distressed. I can't think how it can have happened. The postman didn't come this morning. He will shirk the walk sometimes when the weather's very bad, and I've always said that some day the letters would be important. Miss Lucas," she continued, appealing piteously to that lady as Colonel Thurstan turned and strode incontinently out of the room, "isn't it dreadful? Let me introduce Miss Chester, Miss Lucas; Mr. Ireland, Miss Lucas. I never had their letters, and they've had to walk all the way from Welldon in this pouring rain!"

CHAPTER IV. UNKNOWN GROUND.

A TALL girl, strongly built though slight, rather square-shouldered and long-limbed; a small head, with waving brown hair, neatly and plainly disposed of behind; a face rather more serious, rather more womanly, than befitted its owner's obvious youth, with direct grey eyes, a smooth forehead, a pretty chin, square but rather short, and a pale complexion. This was Miss Chester, the third of Mrs. Ray's guests.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since her unexpected arrival, and Miss Chester was walking up and down a garden path shut off by thick yew hedges. The sky was lowering; everything visible seemed to be saturated with moisture, except the girlish figure in its neat dress and coat of blue serge. It had rained unceasingly for a day and a night. The actual downfall had ceased only an hour before, and Mina Chester had slipped out of the house, unobserved, to get a breath of air before lunch. Her face, as she paced to and fro, was grave. She was evidently considering intently, and as obviously the subject of her meditation did not meet with her approval.

She lifted her head as a footstep sounded on the other side of the hedge; and as she saw the new-comer she smiled, not shyly, but with a serious, matter-of-course friendliness.

To travel in the same third-class compartment with a young man from London to Cheshire, even though the fact of a common destination transpires on the way, does not necessarily create a sense of fellowship, however pleasant and courteous the young man may be. But when the two people thus thrown together find themselves in a common dilemma; involving a considerable amount of enquiry and conjecture, and resulting in a five miles' walk; a familiarity is attained that many days of ordinary intercourse might have failed to bring about. The fact, too, that they presented themselves finally among people who were absolute strangers to both of them, accentuated the bond of union between the fellow-travellers.

Mr. Ralph Ireland, the final member of Mrs. Ray's house-party, was a fair-haired young man, of open countenance, a good deal bronzed; with shrewd blue eyes, and a capable-looking mouth, partly hidden by a fair moustache. There was something about his manner which was not quite that of the ordinary young Englishman; without being rough or familiar, it was unusually simple and frank. He had explained himself to Mina Chester during their walk of the previous day with naïve confidence and frankness. Australian born, of English parents, he had lived all his life in the colonies. He had been, he told her with

perfect simplicity, "rather an idle beggar," with not much turn for settling; and being entirely without family ties, he had been more or less without a profession when a small legacy brought him an opportunity of seeing the world. He had been seeing the world cheerily enough for the last two years, and his visit to High Firs was apparently part of the proceedings.

He lifted his hat, and passing under the low arch which led through the hedge, came up to where Mina Chester stood.

"It's not so bad, now, is it?" he said. "I hope it means to hold up. But it's rather damp for you, isn't it, Miss Chester?"

"I'm fond of fresh air," said Mina, as they began to walk up and down side by side, "and one can't get very much of it when one is hard at work in London."

There was a gentle sedateness about her manner which tacitly assumed the simplest equality between them. There was not the faintest thought of coquetry about it; but it attracted the young man strongly in its unlikeness to any form of girlishness that he had hitherto met.

"Are you always hard at work in London?" he said respectfully.

A pretty, rather patronising smile touched her lips.

"Of course," she said. "Very few women would like to be anything else, I think. I am a secretary."

"Yes," said her companion admiringly. "I think it's awfully jolly of you."

"Ah, that's because you don't understand," she said gently. "I like it very much, and I have been very fortunate to get such a good appointment. It's a great pity you've never worked, Mr. Ireland. You don't know how nice it is."

"Oh, I never said I hadn't worked!" he answered urgently. "I've never got into a groove exactly; but I've put in a good lot of work one way and another. You're quite right, I know; but I thought, perhaps, it was different for a woman."

"Oh, no," she answered; "why should it be?"

She paused and smiled—a little smile which the young man thought more charming than any laughter could have been.

"Perhaps we appreciate our holidays more," she said. "I look forward to mine very much."

"Do you always come into the country like this?" he said.

"I always go into the country if possible," she answered; "but I've never done anything quite like this before." She paused again. There was a dubious, disapproving expression upon her face. "I don't know that I have been quite wise," she went on. "I don't feel sure that I shall like it."

She had turned her grey eyes towards him, as if a touch of uncertainty created in her an instinct towards expression, and he answered her look as much as her words.

"Perhaps—don't you think it is a mistake to make up one's mind too soon?" he suggested hesitatingly and delicately.

"Of course it is," she said. "But one can't help seeing things that one can't quite approve of. Mr. Ireland, did you think it would be this kind of thing?"

"I don't know that I thought much about it," he said cheerfully and confidentially. "I thought it would be a change, and I had a particular fancy for seeing this part of the country. I knew I had only to come away if it didn't turn out well."

"Yes," responded the girl. "Of course it doesn't make much difference to you; but it's my holiday, you see. Perhaps it was rather silly of me," she went on after a moment's silence; "but I hadn't anywhere to go this Christmas, and I thought it sounded nice, and—" she hesitated a little—"I wanted to come here. So I thought I would afford it. Of course I was very careful with references and all that kind of thing; but still——"

Again her eyes contained a mute appeal for his opinion.

"I think they're awfully nice, you know," he said eagerly. "Mr. Ray has been taking no end of trouble to make me understand things about the farm. Don't you like them, Miss Chester?"

"Yes," she said dubiously; "I suppose so. They seem to me to be nice. And yet—do you think the advertisement was quite honest?"

The young man coloured.

"Oh, well, I don't know," he said. "It seems a shame to find fault when they are so kind. I expect it's all right."

"It isn't right to pretend," said Mina, "and to try to make people think there is what there isn't. Why, the house isn't properly furnished!"

"Isn't it?" he returned; "I suppose I don't know much about furniture."

The words were accompanied by the sound of a dinner-bell, and as they made their way towards the house, Mina changed the subject.

The dining-room as they entered it certainly was not wholly undeserving of Miss Chester's strictures. What Mrs. Ray called

"a simple country lunch" was spread upon the long table, the necessary furnishing of which was not without neatly concealed deficiencies; and about the demeanour of the hostess there was a rather anxious cheeriness, as though she were not unsuspicious of Miss Chester's sentiments. Mina Chester and Ralph Ireland were not the last of the party to make their appearance. Colonel Thurstan was standing near the door, but Stafford Ray was not there, neither had Miss Lucas as yet come down. A rather awkward little pause ensued, during which Mrs. Ray and Miss Chester conversed politely but not easily, and Ralph Ireland tried to penetrate the preoccupation that enveloped Colonel Thurstan.

A few minutes later the host appeared, looking harassed in consequence of difficulties among the live-stock; and then the door opened again and Miss Lucas came in. She swept past Colonel Thurstan, not glancing in his direction, and round to her place at the other side of the room.

"Do forgive me, Mrs. Ray," she said, smiling with her charm of manner just a trifle accentuated, "I'd no idea how late it was. How abominable to have kept everybody waiting."

She glanced round the table as she spoke, and her eyes, reaching Mina Chester's face as the girl sat opposite to her, rested there. She had glanced at the girl, unconsciously, as it seemed, many times during the previous evening. And at breakfast-time her eyes had rested on the girlish features so lingeringly that Mina Chester had flushed and smiled back without knowing why.

"You have been out, have you not?" Miss Lucas said now. "I think I saw you in the garden. Didn't you find it very damp and cold?"

There was an unconscious response in the tone in which the girl answered to the elder woman's tacit advance.

"Oh no, thank you," she said. "The air is very nice, not cold at all."

"You are used to the country?"

Mina shook her head. "No," she said, "I've always lived in London; but I don't mind the weather."

A little hum of voices had risen between Colonel Thurstan, Ralph Ireland, and their hostess. Stafford Ray, finding Miss Lucas and Miss Chester in no need of entertainment, was glad to eat his lunch and digest his private worries in silence.

"You are a worker, I know," said Miss Lucas. "Do you go far every day between your home and your business? Where do you live?"

"I have a room at a club," the girl answered, "a residential club, you know. It's so much more convenient than having to order things and look after things when one is out all day."

"Do you live quite alone, then?"

"Yes," said the girl simply. "I have no one to live with."

Miss Lucas's eyes were very compassionate, but she said playfully:

"No uncles, no cousins, no aunts? That seems a little isolated."

"I suppose it is," said the girl, smiling. "Most people have relations, haven't they? And I have some cousins, I believe, in Scotland. But there is no reason why I should live with them."

"Is there not?" said Miss Lucas gently. "Isn't it lonely for you?"

"I never think about it," answered the girl. "I am quite used to it, you see."

Miss Lucas had asked her questions with a manner full of sympathetic interest. But before Mina Chester had finished speaking, the voices at the other end of the table seemed to have arrested her hearer's attention. The gentle curves of Miss Lucas's lips merged suddenly into a scornful line. She did not turn her head, but something in her attitude suggested to Mrs. Ray that she was listening to the second conversation, and with a gallant desire to draw all her guests together, her hostess addressed her briskly.

"What do you think, Miss Lucas?" she said. "We are talking of the difficulty of distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Colonel Thurstan seems to think that people may rely too much on facts, and that appearances are not always to be trusted."

"But I say, don't you know," put in Ralph Ireland cheerily—"and the discussion arose out of something I said, didn't it, Mrs. Ray?—that facts are facts, and that a man, however trustworthy he might have seemed, is always liable to go to pieces, no one knows how or why."

Colonel Thurstan had moved, as though to interrupt, on Mrs. Ray's first words.

"The discussion is not a particularly practical one," he said now, and his voice seemed to be unnecessarily steady and controlled.

"Colonel Thurstan's appreciation of facts would seem to the uninitiated to be peculiar to himself; and I agree with him that, under the circumstances, argument is useless."

Miss Lucas had not even glanced at Colonel Thurstan as she spoke. Every line of her face was eloquent of some hidden but tumultuous feeling. The words seemed to break from her almost in spite of herself. They fell upon the poor little conversation with an absolutely paralysing effect.

For a moment no one spoke. The men applied themselves assiduously to their luncheon, and Mina Chester turned wondering eyes on Miss Lucas. It fell to Mrs. Ray to throw herself desperately into the breach.

"I have been showing Miss Chester over the house," she said, seizing upon the first idea that presented itself to her, and addressing herself rather incoherently to any one who would respond. "She was very anxious to see it all, were you not, Miss Chester?"

"It is a very fine old house," said Mina.

But the observation, though well-intentioned, was not exactly conversational, and Mrs. Ray continued with nervous alertness:

"By the bye, Miss Chester noticed something that my husband remarked upon yesterday. I wonder whether you've observed it, Miss Lucas? The portrait in the hall, the one over the fireplace, you know—have you happened to notice how very much you resemble it?"

With a sudden simultaneous movement, Miss Lucas and Colonel Thurstan turned to their hostess. Miss Lucas was flushing and paling strangely, and her words did not seem to come readily. It was Colonel Thurstan who said quietly:

"These slight resemblances often strike strangers."

The colour rushed over Miss Lucas's face, and she broke impulsively into speech.

"The resemblance is not slight," she said. "You are quite right, Mrs. Ray. I am exactly like your picture. May we not go into the drawing-room?"

It was in a considerably depressed frame of mind that Mrs. Ray betook herself about an hour later to the drawing-room. The three men had gone out with their guns directly after lunch, and their hostess felt that Miss Lucas and Miss Chester must no longer be left to one another for entertainment.

Miss Chester was not in the drawing-room, however, when Mrs. Ray, with a piece of needlework in her hand, opened the door. Miss Lucas was sitting alone by the fire, and the stormy thought on her face cleared instantly as she received Mrs. Ray with a smile.

"Are we going to have a talk together?" she said. "That is very nice."

She was her brightest and most sympathetic self, and even before Mrs. Ray was fairly settled, the nervousness engendered in her by the uncertainty of temper evinced by her guest at lunch had disappeared. She did not speak at once; she was adapting her ideas to the pleasant sense of companionship and friendliness.

"Have you lived here long?"

The question was asked so pleasantly, that all thought of the position in which the speaker stood to her faded from Mrs. Ray's mind.

"We came here last spring," she said. "We had lived in Manchester until then. Do you know Manchester?"

Miss Lucas shook her head.

"I've never been there," she said; "but you must have found this place a change in a great many ways. A pleasant change in some ways, but an unpleasant one in others, I dare say?"

The shadow cast by the spectre of Mrs. Ray's life dawned faintly forth upon her energetic little face. And the womanly eyes watching her noticed it.

"We were very glad to come," said Mrs. Ray slowly. "Manchester doesn't suit my husband at all. Country life agrees with him much better."

"And you prefer what suits him best, of course. I hope the country has made Mr. Ray really stronger."

There is nothing so magnetic as sympathy. There was nothing in the least demonstrative about the words; but Mrs. Ray responded to them almost unconsciously with a sense of confidence.

"It has," she said eagerly. "Oh, I couldn't tell you the difference it made to him. He had not been really well for years before we came here, and last winter he was so ill. And when he got better the doctor said he must live an out-of-doors life. I don't know what we should have done—because he was a solicitor, you see—if this place hadn't come to us just at the right moment."

"It was left to you?" said Miss Lucas.

"It came to my husband quite unexpectedly, as heir-at-law to a cousin."

"The cousin bought High Firs, I suppose," said Miss Lucas carelessly.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Ray, "it belonged to some people named Woodroffe, I believe."

Miss Lucas did not speak for a moment. Then she said brightly:

"A very nice inheritance, Mrs. Ray. Was it—had it been much neglected when you came to it?"

Mrs. Ray sighed.

"Yes," she said, "it isn't in at all a good state. That's one of our great difficulties."

"Can't you get it right?"

Mrs. Ray let her work fall on her knee, and sat looking straight before her into the fire. "We must," she said in a low tone, "if we don't, we can't stay here; and if we can't stay——"

She broke off short, not able to follow the sentence to its conclusion. Then she began again:

"You see, it's so difficult for us," she said, "because no money came to us; nothing at all except High Firs; and we had none of our own. We thought we could make the farm pay, and I knew my husband would have managed it beautifully if it had been in order when he took it. But it wasn't, and nothing seems to go right."

"And if it doesn't answer, will you have to go back to Manchester?"

Miss Lucas spoke softly, and a little sob broke from Mrs. Ray.

"We can't," she said; "it would kill him. We must make it answer somehow. Day and night I'm always thinking how."

She caught up her work again and began to sew desperately, and at the same moment the sound of the front door bell was heard. She paused, and looked at Miss Lucas, startled out of her rôle of hostess.

"Oh dear," she said, "that must be Miss Lloyd. She said she would call. I hope you won't mind."

Miss Lucas had only time to smile vaguely and reassuringly when the door opened and the caller appeared.

Miss Lloyd was the daughter of the vicar of the parish in which High Firs was situated. She was a woman of about two-and-thirty, sharp-faced, sallow and gaunt in person, and her mud-bespattered attire was more suitable for a ten-mile walk than for a call of any ceremony.

"How do you do, Mrs. Ray?" she said patronisingly. "Very unfortunate weather, isn't it? This is one of your guests, I suppose?"

"How do you do, Miss Lloyd?" returned Mrs. Ray. "Let me have the pleasure of introducing you to Miss Lucas."

Miss Lloyd evincing an intention of shaking hands, Miss Lucas shook hands with her, and Miss Lloyd transferred her patronage from hostess to guest.

"Such a pity it should be so wet!" she said. "We country-born people don't mind it, of course; but Londoners are generally so ill provided against mud. You've not been out to-day, I dare say."

There was an immense superiority in the tone and question, and as Miss Lucas shook her head, a little quiver of amusement touched the corner of her lips.

"No," she said, "I have not."

"I'm afraid you'll find it of no use to wait for fine weather here," returned Miss Lloyd, with aggressive calmness, "and so possibly my errand may be useless. But I've come up to ask every one to come down to the school treat on the twenty-eighth. Mrs. Ray told me you wanted to see something of the Christmas life of the place."

"It's very kind of you, Miss Lloyd," said Mrs. Ray. Her voice trembled a little, and her whole frame was bristling with resentment at the visitor who had never before struck her as so aggressively patronising. "But I don't know—I don't feel sure that Miss Lucas will care——"

"Oh, of course, there's no necessity!" said Miss Lloyd tartly. "I shouldn't like any one to come to the treat who doesn't care about it. You should not——"

But Miss Lucas stopped her.

"Mrs. Ray has been most kind," she said, with a touch of hauteur that Mrs. Ray had never seen in her before. "Any arrangement she makes for our amusement will, I am sure, be delightful."

The relief with which Mrs. Ray hailed the approach of afternoon tea, with which Sarah at the moment appeared, was hardly to be measured. With tea appeared Mina Chester, hastily introduced by Mrs. Ray, and the ceremony was hardly concluded when Miss Lloyd rose to take leave.

"No tea, thank you," she said. "I must be getting back. Good-bye, Mrs. Ray. I shall expect you on the twenty-eighth, then."

She extended a set of cold finger-tips to Miss Lucas, who accepted them with a smile, shook hands patronisingly with Mina Chester, and withdrew.

"Disagreeable woman!" said Mrs. Ray vehemently, as the door closed. "I wish I'd never asked her to ask us! Only, you see, I thought it would be something to do—something Christmassy."

In the excitement of her indignation

Mrs. Ray was entirely oblivious of the fact that she was letting her guests further into the secrets of their entertainment than she would have done in a cooler moment. Miss Lucas caught sight of Mina Chester's face as the girl listened, and interposed quickly:

"It's a capital idea," she said brightly. "Just the thing we all want. A village school treat is the best fun in the world, and I dare say Miss Chester has never been to one. As to her being a disagreeable woman, what does that matter?"

But while she spoke the door had opened again, and the three men had come in, Stafford Ray in front, Colonel Thurstan and Ralph Ireland talking together as they followed him. Stafford Ray took up Miss Lucas's words.

"Who is a disagreeable woman, may I ask?" he said.

His wife answered him. "Miss Lloyd," she said. "You and Miss Lucas will agree, Stafford. She's been here to ask us to the school treat on the twenty-eighth."

"And are we all going?"

It was Colonel Thurstan who spoke. He had come up to the fire, and he spoke with indifferent composure. Miss Lucas started as he spoke. Her manner had altered on the entrance of the men, and she looked at Mrs. Ray now with an assumed carelessness, oddly contradicted by a slight vibration in her voice.

"You forgot to tell Miss Lloyd that you would have lost one of your guests by the twenty-eighth," she said. "Colonel Thurstan goes on the twenty-seventh, I believe."

Before Mrs. Ray could answer, Colonel Thurstan spoke.

"No," he said. "I propose to myself the pleasure of staying another week if Mrs. Ray will be kind enough to keep me."

With a movement so abrupt as to be almost violent, Miss Lucas rose.

"Miss Chester," she said incoherently, "I promised to show you my needlework. Would you like to see it now?"

CHAPTER V. AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS.

THE elements were against Mrs. Ray. The wet weather that had received her guests declared itself as a settled condition of affairs. Day after day she awoke to see the same rain-blurred landscape. Day after day the rain fell in a cold, persistent downpour from morning till night.

With a sanguineness that was almost pathetic, Mrs. Ray fortified herself with a conviction, how or why formed nobody could have said, that it was absolutely impossible such weather could continue over Christmas. Even a mild and dripping Christmas Eve was powerless to shake her faith, and she superintended the decoration of the house with distressingly sodden evergreens, and piled up Christmas logs in the great hearths without a doubt in her mind but that the next morning would dawn bright and frosty. But even Christmas Day betrayed her. It was as wet as any of its predecessors, and it was raw and cold to boot. Perhaps the hostess's disappointment affected the spirits of the party; or perhaps they were all influenced by the incongruity between the festal spirit of the day and the dreary front it presented. For a cloud of depression, unequalled even in the annals of the past depressing week, settled down upon the house. Nobody went to church; and after a lunch during which conversation languished pitifully, the party separated as if by common consent.

Miss Lucas went to the drawing-room; Mina Chester repaired to her room; Ralph Ireland went round to the farm with Stafford Ray; Colonel Thurstan shut himself up in the library; and Mrs. Ray retired, heavy-hearted, to inspect the plum-pudding. At three o'clock in the afternoon not a sound was to be heard in the house but the beating of the rain against the windows and the moaning of the wind.

The silence was broken from without; the garden door opened and Stafford Ray came in. Kicking off his wet boots, and taking off his rain-soaked overcoat, he came into the hall and proceeded to warm himself before the fire; and while he was thus occupied the library door opened and Colonel Thurstan came out. He was looking grave, but he paused, as he saw his host, to speak a word or two about the weather. A mutual liking had sprung up between the two men, and Stafford Ray responded cordially. Then he paused, not looking at his guest as he moved one of the logs with his foot.

"I am more sorry than I can say that things should have fallen out like this," he said.

"Thanks," said Colonel Thurstan. "It's nothing more than one must calculate upon in this climate. I'm afraid it's more distressing to Mrs. Ray than to anybody else.'

"She regrets it very much, of course," said Stafford. He paused again, and then said: "If, under the circumstances, you'd like to get away, Thurstan, don't let anything stand in your way. We shall quite understand—both my wife and I."

Deliberately matter-of-fact as was the form in which the words were spoken, there was a delicate something behind that the other man seemed to understand. Colonel Thurstan did not speak for a moment, and then he said slowly: "Thanks; but I have no desire whatever to get away."

He went on across the hall and up the stairs, leaving his host staring into the fire. But he was not left to meditation long. A step sounded along the passage leading from the kitchen premises, and Mrs. Ray appeared. A wonderfully low-spirited expression of satisfaction broke from her as she became aware of her husband's presence, and she came up to the fireplace. She did not speak, but stood gazing absently and ruefully before her.

"Well, little woman," her husband said cheerfully, "what have you been doing?"

"I don't know," she answered. "Oh, Stafford, isn't it dreadful?"

"Well, it isn't just what we should have chosen," he said, "but it may clear up, you know."

"I don't believe it would do any good," she answered desperately. "Now that Christmas Day is such a dreadful failure, I don't think anything will make things better!"

Her husband patted her gently on the shoulder.

"Christmas Day is very often a failure," he said. "People expect too much of it. Besides, it isn't over yet. I dare say we shall cheer up at dinner."

Mrs. Ray lifted eyes eloquent of despair.

"How can we cheer up?" she said, "with Miss Lucas and Colonel Thurstan as they are! Stafford, it's dreadful! She is so nice and sweet to everybody else, and I'm on thorns whenever they are together. It's dreadful when she ignores him, but it's much worse when she flames up."

"And she 'flames up' with increasing frequency," observed Stafford Ray.

"Why doesn't he go?" broke out Colonel Thurstan's hostess piteously. "What can have made him stay on? We should have got on so beautifully without him, I'm sure we should."

"He has his reasons, I suppose," said Stafford Ray. "You can't suppose he stays—to be treated as Miss Lucas treats him—solely for the pleasure of it!" He stopped, and then, as though with the object of diverting his wife's thoughts into cheerier lines, he said: "Your other pair are all right, however. There's no trouble connected with them."

Mrs. Ray paused doubtfully.

"They get on nicely together," she said. "And, yes, I suppose they are both very pleasant. Mr. Ireland certainly is."

But while Mr. and Mrs. Ray were thus placidly commending them, one member of the "other pair" was being disturbed by ideas likely to lead to results calculated to extinguish her hostess's last gleam of comfort. Mina Chester and Ralph Ireland had now been for nearly a week under the same roof. It had happened, naturally enough, that the two youngest members of the party had been thrown a good deal together, and so far the girl had accepted this position of affairs with simple unconcern.

Of all the workings that were going on inside Mina Chester's grave little head on this Christmas Day it would be impossible to give any idea. There was an undercurrent amongst them of which she herself was absolutely unconscious. But they had brought her to a frame of mind that seemed to herself, and would have seemed to any other person to whom the surface aspect of affairs alone was presented, natural, and even praiseworthy. She asked herself no questions; she deliberately entrenched herself in a position of superior reprobation. Mina disapproved of flirtation. She had always held in grave contempt the light-mindedness of young men who could not talk to a girl without spicing their intercourse with such seasoning. But she decided gradually that she had more of Mr. Ireland's society than was necessary. It was ridiculous, for instance, she told herself, that she could never even go for a walk when it cleared up for a little, without finding him hanging about in the hall ready to ask to be allowed to accompany her. She had become aware after lunch to-day that he was watching covertly but intently, for any word as to her intentions for the afternoon. And in accordance with her new sense of the position Mina had instinctively frustrated his plans. Instead of waiting for a possible clearance, she took advantage of his departure with Stafford Ray to slip out early in the afternoon, fortified against the weather by thick boots, short skirt, macintosh, and umbrella.

As she made her way along the muddy lanes, her enjoyment of the process was of a severe and deliberate order. It was her first lonely walk for a week, and she assured herself continually that she was greatly enjoying her solitude. It was presumably vexation that brought the colour into her face with a swift rush as she became aware

of a familiar masculine figure coming with long strides to meet her.

"I saw you turn into the lane," began Ralph Ireland cheerfully as he reached her, "and I thought as I was going for a walk, too, perhaps you wouldn't mind if we joined forces."

His manner to her had altered during the last week, slightly and very subtly. It was quite as simple, but it had acquired something which, all insensible as she was of the fact, had stirred in the girl the impulses above described.

Mina received him coldly.

"I don't know," she said. "It's too wet for a walk."

Ralph Ireland glanced at her in some surprise.

"It's better than it was when you set out," he said. "But perhaps you didn't realise how bad it was."

A certain expression of lofty disapprobation developed upon Mina's face.

"I wasn't thinking of my own walk," she said. "I never intended to go far. I thought you meant a man's walk."

"What! A fifteen miler!" said Ralph Ireland. He was cheerful still, but a little doubtful. A touch of disapproval in her tone made itself apparent to him. "Well, it is rather wet for that, isn't it?"

"I shouldn't have thought that the weather mattered to a man," said Miss Chester loftily. "I should have thought you would have been glad of something of the kind, after all the dawdling of this week."

Ralph Ireland laughed. Her words were not reasonable, and he was aware of the fact; but he laughed rather deprecatingly, nevertheless.

"Oh, well!" he said, "one comes into the country to dawdle, don't you think? And I have tramped about, too. Why, we've tramped about together, you know. It was seven miles the day before yesterday, there and back, to Escott."

The words, instead of softening his hearer, seemed to harden her heart.

"You speak as if 'tramping about,' as you call it, were really an occupation, Mr. Ireland," she said. "Do you never intend to do anything else?"

"Rather!" he returned lightly; "some of these days!"

"Then I should have thought it was time you began," said the girl sternly. "You've been doing nothing for two years, on your own showing, but amuse yourself."

"I've been taking a holiday," he pleaded.

Mina Chester turned upon him instantly, with cutting scorn.

"I don't understand a two years' holiday," she said, "and I really can't make out what you have ever done to deserve a holiday at all."

Ralph Ireland made no reply. His cheery face had grown dejected, and he seemed to submit himself to his critic with a meekness out of proportion to the independence of his usual demeanour.

"You are rather down on me, Miss Chester," he said at last, in a low voice. "Have I done anything to annoy you?"

It would have seemed impossible that Mina's figure should become more erect than it already was, had it not been for the fact that she undoubtedly drew it up.

"Certainly not," she said.

"You didn't mind my coming, did you? We've had such a lot of jolly walks together that I thought, well—I thought we might as well have another."

Mina Chester was a veracious young woman; but her next words were not characterised by absolute truth.

"I did not think about it," she said. "It's not of sufficient importance to make any difference to me."

They turned into a narrow lane that led back to High Firs, and they plodded along it, in the early twilight of the rainy afternoon, in absolute silence.

The party had not been in the drawing-room that evening, awaiting the announcement of dinner, for five minutes, before Stafford Ray observed that the one cheerful note in the ill-harmonised chord had lost its tune. Ralph Ireland hardly spoke. Glancing from the young man to Mina Chester, her host observed that she, too, was silent and rather pale. If she had contributed little, hitherto, to the actual merriment of the party, she had been invariably pleasant and responsive. To-night, however, she seemed to be withdrawn from her surroundings and to have entrenched herself in a stiff, unapproachable reserve.

The Christmas dinner that followed seemed to Mrs. Ray to add the last straw to the burden of her distress. The long pauses of silence were frightful; but even more terrible were the spasmodic attempts at a forced hilarity. And after dinner, when all the Christmas forms had been gone through with and the party was reassembled in the drawing-room, even the pretence of festivity was abandoned, and a quiet of the most depressing nature prevailed. About twenty minutes elapsed, and

then this quiet passed the limits of Mrs. Ray's endurance. Springing up from her chair she faced her company, a red patch of distress on either cheek, her eyes bright with the effort she was making.

"Come, good people," she said with a forced cheerfulness that sounded exaggerated, even to herself, "Christmas Day isn't over yet, and a merry ending is still before us. We've been having an old-fashioned, homely day, let's wind up with an old-fashioned amusement! What do you all say? Suppose we tell one another stories!"

As though the preceding stillness had involved some kind of strain to every member of the party, a little stir went round it on Mrs. Ray's movement; but nobody spoke until Stafford Ray came to his wife's assistance.

"Old fashions are not so easily revived," he said, "and sometimes, when they are revived, they don't turn out very well. I'm afraid we're none of us prepared to turn ourselves into an old-fashioned Christmas Number on the spur of the moment."

"Why not?" demanded Mrs. Ray energetically and with a forced little laugh. "It was a regular Christmas institution once upon a time, and I don't see why it shouldn't be great fun. Mr. Ireland, what do you think?"

Ralph Ireland held a magazine on his knee, though he had not attempted to turn a page for the last half-hour. He shook his head dubiously.

"I dare say it would be very jolly, Mrs. Ray," he said. "But I'm no good at story-telling myself. And, perhaps, as Ray suggests, that kind of thing has been a trifle played out."

Mrs. Ray tapped one hand against the other as though her impatience was indeed becoming desperate.

"Nonsense!" she cried briskly. "It's old enough to be revived, and anybody can tell a story if they choose." She glanced despairingly down the room, and with a sudden instinctive hope that she could not have explained, "Miss Lucas, what do you say?" she cried.

As though her nerves were strained almost beyond her power of self-control, Miss Lucas rose impulsively and came up to where her hostess stood. Miss Lucas was looking extremely handsome this evening. She was dressed in a black velvet gown, cut square and plentifully relieved with old lace, and the dress became her admirably. But it was the intense life which seemed to fill her, the rapid play of expression, passionate out of all proportion to the petty incidents of the moment, that made her appearance so striking. Throughout the day her self-command seemed to have been exercised to the uttermost to keep in check something that flashed out now and again irrepressibly, whenever circumstances brought her into contact with Colonel Thurstan. Throughout the day the barrier of bare politeness which stood between them seemed to have been wearing thinner as she alternately ignored him, or flashed upon him some passionate sarcasm. She did not look at him now; but her whole face seemed to be alight with a fire which her eyes held for him alone as she said quickly and with an unusual ring in her voice: "It's a capital idea, Mrs. Ray! I'm sure we shall all enjoy it. I'll set the example, if you like, and begin."

CHAPTER VI. MISS LUCAS'S STORY.

Even through that dejected little company Miss Lucas's words carried a thrill. Mina Chester came nearer to the fire, with a pleased expectancy in her face. Ralph Ireland shut his magazine and tossed it on the table as he said, more cheerily than he had spoken that evening:

"Miss Lucas is a public benefactor, and I propose a vote of thanks."

Mrs. Ray could have fallen upon the neck of the public benefactor with tears of joy, but she restricted herself to conventional thanks of surpassing heartiness; thanks echoed more quietly by her husband, into whose observant eyes had shot a gleam of curiosity. Even Colonel Thurstan seemed not untouched by the stir. He moved suddenly, and looked steadily at Miss Lucas. Then he looked away again without speaking. He rested his elbow on a table near him, propping his chin on his hand; and there was something stiff and constrained about his attitude.

"Where will you sit, Miss Lucas?" said Stafford Ray, gaily. "By all the laws of precedent, the story-teller should sit in the middle."

"In the middle, by all means," responded Miss Lucas rather recklessly. "Are you coming to sit next me, Mina? That's right."

By this arrangement Mina Chester came between Miss Lucas and Colonel Thurstan, and by a sharp and apparently accidental little movement Miss Lucas so turned her chair, that while the girl was close to her

side the silent figure by the table was behind her.

"I only know one story," went on Miss Lucas in the same vibrating tones, "so I can offer you no choice; and even if you find it dull, I bargain that you hear me out."

"We are not in the least likely to find it dull," said Mrs. Ray, the first touch of content that she had known that day descending on her harassed soul. "Is it a Christmas story?"

Miss Lucas drew a long breath—rather a tremulous breath it seemed to Mina Chester. She took the girl's hand as it lay on the arm of her chair, and began to play absently with the long sensitive fingers. Now that she stood on the brink of the undertaking to which she had pledged herself she seemed to be looking—not doubtfully, but as one who faces the difficulty of arrangement—into the recesses of her memory.

"No," she said at last, "it's not a Christmas story; it's a summer story, I think—the story of a long vacation."

Colonel Thurstan lifted his head, and leaned forward as if to speak. His eyes rested on Miss Lucas's profile, and he fell back into his former attitude slowly and deliberately. She had ignored his movement. To all outward appearance she might have been unconscious of it. But her voice had gained a suggestion of defiant determination as she began her story.

"It was in an English country house," she said, "that the people of whom I am going to tell you lived. If you want to picture their surroundings, you may think of this house. One country house is very like another. And it will save us the trouble of description."

She had spoken hurriedly, but she controlled her voice with an effort, and went on:

"It was a home that any girls and boys might have been happy to grow up in; and a girl who grew to womanhood there twenty years ago, though the chances of life drifted her away from it, loves it now no less than she loved it then. The girl's name"—she hesitated almost imperceptibly, and then continued fluently: "the girl's name was Lucy. Perhaps it was because she had no mother to be the centre of her home thoughts and her home life that Lucy loved the place itself so dearly. Perhaps it was by reason of the same blank in her life that all her childish hopes and joys, all the happiness of a childhood as bright as any child ever had, were bound up with the two little companions with whom her early days were passed—her only brother and her cousin. The girl was the youngest of the trio; her cousin, whose name was—" again Miss Lucas paused and hesitated—"was James, was the eldest. There were four years between them, and two years between Lucy and Geoffrey, her brother. But in the days when they were all children together the difference was of little account. Geoffrey was a quiet child, reserved and silent, apt to seem a little slow at times; and Lucy was his protector, his tyrant, and his most devoted slave. She fought his battles; she pushed and pulled him through all the difficulties of their childish games and adventures.

"It was, I suppose, something self-willed in her character, that made the footing on which she stood to her cousin different from that usual between a boy, and a girl four years his junior. They met on an equality; there was a ground of strength of will, common to them, on which Geoffrey had no footing; and on this ground they quarrelled, on this ground they made it up again, on this ground the girl developed an admiration for the boyish superiority that she alternately resented and denied. Childhood has no beginning for a child. An eternity of hourly intercourse seemed to lie behind them when the first break came, in the shape of school life for the boys. Years came and went, each bringing with it Christmas, Easter, and Midsummer. Holidays followed holidays, and such changes as they brought came about so imperceptibly that nothing marked the flow of time which made the schoolboys into men, the girl into a woman.

"The sequence of term time and holiday came to an end at last. James passed from Sandhurst into a line regiment; Geoffrey went to Oxford. For a year their appearances at home were irregular, and as they seldom happened to come together, the old life in all its completeness was broken. Then circumstances so fell out that it was renewed with a sense of permanency that the holidays of school life had never known. Geoffrey announced his intention of spending the whole of a long vacation at home; and about a month before the end of that May term, James met with an accident, and came home also on long sick leave. He was not ill after the first week, and by the time Geoffrey arrived he was himself to all intents and purposes, but declared in need of at least three months' rest."

Miss Lucas paused. She had spoken with an ease that seemed to be the outcome

of strange excitement. She was looking straight before her now; her eyes dark and glowing. Her audience had listened intently, their interest held by something indefinite about the speaker. There was a moment's silence, and then Mrs. Ray said:

"Will you tell us what they were like?"

A smile passed across Miss Lucas's lips. She did not turn her eyes towards the speaker, but they grew a little dreamy, as she said:

"Like? In some respects they were the children of ten years before, grown very little older, at the beginning of that long vacation. Geoffrey was fair, with an oval face and a pale complexion. He had dreamy blue eyes and slow, absent-minded ways He had not done much at college, he was not the kind of man who makes much show; but he was interested in a slow, erratic fashion in innumerable out-of-the-way questions; and I think there were the makings of a poet beneath his sleepy exterior." Miss Lucas's voice had grown tremulous, and she went on hurriedly and with a certain defiance in her voice. "Lucy had grown from a self-willed child into a headstrong girl. She was of a tempestuous nature, and years of practical independence had given her a tendency to arrange all things that came in contact with her after a somewhat high-handed fashion. Where she loved, she loved wholesale; where she trusted, she trusted wholesale; and in those days she did not hate."

She stopped again, and then resumed, dropping into her former even tone.

"The freedom of their childish days had been as nothing to the freedom of what they would have called their maturity. There was no one in the house to whom their word was not law, except its master.

"Geoffrey and Lucy's father came of a family which had owned the old place, from father to son, through centuries. He had inherited some of the best qualities of his race; honour, integrity, and courtesy; and he had developed others on his own account. He had scholarly tastes of a dilettante nature; but his studies had not led him in the direction of human nature; and he had a contempt for youth that was almost obtuse. He lived his life in the same house with his children, meeting them at meal times and occasionally in the evening, furthering their wishes kindly enough, but finding all his interest in the engravings, of which he was a collector, and in visits to London and to the Continent, where he foregathered with men of like tastes with himself. The young people, thus ignored, ignored their elder. He never interfered with them, and gradually there grew amongst them a notion that their affairs were no concern of his, and that they were to go their own way for ever. I think now that the neglect which brought this state of things about was not intentional. I think that in what happened afterwards, the father, who did not suffer least, was to be pitied, and pitied only. I think he was merely waiting until his son should have grown out of a stage with which he had no sympathy, and that he looked forward to the time when the boy, in whom he took no interest, should become the man who would be congenial to him. He welcomed his son, on the first evening of that long vacation, asked him a few careless questions, sat some time in the drawing-room after dinner, and then went to his library, leaving the three young people alone together.

"I think they were all three anxious," Miss Lucas went on, "that the holiday time before them should be a repetition of the holiday times of old. To Geoffrey, indeed, no thought of any possible change had come." Miss Lucas's voice had grown lower, and she was stroking Mina Chester's hand gently. "Neither of the other two, I believe, wished to press into definite shape the difference that was gradually creeping over their intercourse. One of them—Lucy—was in that thorny stage of dawning womanhood which is half inclined to deny, half inclined to turn and rend, the conviction which is slowly developing her whole nature.

"Nothing had passed between James and Lucy during the three weeks of his convalescence, which might not have passed between them during any three weeks of their long familiarity. If they had quarrelled less often, the captious uncertainty of the girl's temper had rendered their quarrels bitterer when they did occur. Nevertheless, there was a difference. Something was creeping between them which all the pride of her girlish nature was set to keep at bay.

"It was under a restless distaste for an unusual silence which fell upon the drawing-room that first evening, that she announced to her brother a piece of news that she knew would hardly please him.

"'Geoffrey,' she said, 'you don't know Netta Strangeways, do you?'

"Geoffrey was lying on the sofa, his hands clasped behind his head.

"'I never, to my knowledge, heard of her,' he said lazily.

"'You must have heard of her,' returned his sister, 'because she's a great friend of mine. She's coming here on Thursday, for a long visit.'

"Geoffrey turned his head and looked at her reproachfully.

"'What a bore!' he said. It was characteristic of him to take no further trouble to express his sense that a stranger would spoil the harmony of their little party; and Lucy, who had invited her guest before she knew of the reunion the long vacation was to bring about, proceeded to deal peremptorily with her brother's unspoken objections.

"'Oh, no, it isn't!' she said. 'She's the dearest little thing in the world, and she'll enjoy herself immensely. James knows her, don't you, James? She was here from Saturday till Monday, when he had his last leave. Poor dear, she's a governess, and has to look after three riotous children when she's more fit to be looked after herself. She's been ill from overwork, and I want her to have a thorough rest. You'll go with me to meet her on Thursday, Geoffrey, won't you?'

"It so happened, however, that Lucy did not go to meet her friend after all. On the morning succeeding her brother's return, she was thrown, to her infinite disgust, from her horse, and though she was not hurt, she was just shaken enough to submit to the medical fiat which enjoined quiet for a week. The idea that Netta Strangeways should arrive unmet troubled her greatly, and she caught eagerly at a suggestion that James should represent her at the station.

"Lucy was a prisoner in her own sitting-room upstairs—such a dear old room, with long windows looking out over the country, and low window-seats. She was lying on the sofa, and Geoffrey, who had spent the afternoon reading to her and listening to her desultory talk, was sitting in one of the window recesses when James's hand opened the door, and his voice announced: 'I have brought Miss Strangeways, Lucy. Here she is.' And Netta Strangeways came in."

Miss Lucas stopped. She seemed to be reflecting, and strange tender smiles touched her lips and eyes and disappeared again.

"You will want to know what Netta was like," she said. She turned for the first time and looked at Mina Chester as the girl sat by her side. She put her fingers under the pretty chin, and turned up the girlish face, looking at it intently. "I think I can't do better than tell you at once that I have never seen any one who reminds me of her as Miss Chester does. She had the same hair, the same eyes, above all, the same chin, only the expression was different. Netta was shy and shrinking to the last degree. She was a girl who should always have had some one to protect her. Even when she was quite at ease and full of gentle confidence in the people about her, there was something appealing in her glance, something that was always ready to develop into self-distrust."

Miss Lucas released the girlish chin, and touching Mina's cheek gently, she said, as though half forgetting her audience:

"Be thankful for your self-possession, dear."

Then she resumed her narrative hurriedly and with a little constraint:

"Netta stood hesitating just within the doorway, and Lucy sprang up from her sofa and welcomed her eagerly. Lucy had not many friends; she lavished all her love upon a few. She turned at last with her arm thrown protectingly round Netta's slighter figure and looked for her brother.

"'Geoffrey,' she said, 'come and be introduced to Miss Strangeways.'

"Geoffrey was standing with his back to the window, and the sunset light was streaming over his head upon Netta as she turned shyly towards him. He came towards them slowly, and Lucy thought his eyes looked odd.

"'This is my brother, Netta,' she said. 'Geoffrey, this is my Netta.'

"And then the two shook hands in silence.

"What happy days they were that followed! What perfect girl and boy happiness they held! All day long the four were together, sharing a common stock of pleasures, interests, jokes. Sometimes they spent long afternoons in walks or rides. Sometimes they loitered the time away on the lawn, sometimes in Lucy's sitting-room. Netta's shyness melted as a shadow before the sun. A niche in the little party seemed to have been waiting for her all these years, and she fitted into it instantly. Only with Lucy's father she never became familiarised. In his presence she was always frightened and unready.

"Perhaps the happy intercourse of those days, with their simple, youthful pleasure in life, did more to bring Lucy into harmony with her womanly self than anything else could have done. It gave her time; it loosened the strange strain of feeling that had chafed her, in spite of herself, into

rebellion; it allowed all that was best in her to mature gradually. Perhaps the atmosphere about her influenced her too. Perhaps the sight and sense of the idyll —tacitly ignored as far as speech went, among the quartette—which was growing out of the happy unfettered summer life, did not pass her by untouched. She asked herself no questions, she did not analyse her growing womanliness, only I think her life went a little deeper every day and her quarrels with her cousin ceased.

"It was an afternoon towards the middle of August. The weeks had disappeared unnoticed in the passing, as only weeks so spent can disappear. Lucy had promised Netta a sketch of the garden, to be made from one of the drawing-room windows, and the day being very hot, she had established herself in the cool of the shady room to keep her promise. Geoffrey and Netta had been with her for some time, and at last they went away into the garden to find shade there. Lucy had worked contentedly in solitude for more than an hour, when the door opened and James came in. She knew his footstep, but she did not lift her head, and he came up to her quietly and looked over her shoulder.

"'That's very good,' he said. He was not a man of many words, although his silence had nothing in common with Geoffrey's. There was something reliable about it, and everything he said carried weight. Simple as they were his words carried weight now. He did not often praise her paintings. He used to say that they presented their subject in too original a light for him. Lucy did not look up, but she felt the colour rush into her cheeks as she said:

"'I'm glad you think so.'

"He did not move from his position at the back of her chair, and Lucy felt that her hand was not quite steady. She laid down her brush and began to mix some colour.

"'I wish you would do a sketch for me,' he said. 'Will you, Lucy?'

"'A sketch of what?' she said, working away industriously at her colour.

"'A sketch of the house,' he answered. He moved as he spoke to the window by which she was working. 'A sketch from the beech over there. It's my favourite view.'

"'You shall have it,' she said.

"'Thank you,' he answered. He said no more and the words were followed by a silence. Lucy's hand had grown steady again. She took up her brush and worked on absently. A sudden strange peace seemed to have risen in her; she was absolutely at rest, absolutely secure, and the silence might have lasted on for ever to her unalloyed content.

"It was broken by a movement on James's part. He had been leaning against the window-frame looking out into the garden. He lifted himself, and his unseeing gaze seemed to become interested. Then he said in a low voice:

"'Lucy, look here.'

"She rose and came towards him, following the direction of his hand, as he made a slight gesture.

"'Ah,' she said softly, 'James!'

"A long walk ran down one side of the garden, screened here and there by trees and shrubs. Towards this walk James had pointed, and down it, walking very slowly, their faces turned each to the other, were Geoffrey and Netta. There was that in every look, as they sauntered on absorbed in one another, which no onlooker could mistake. They were treading on enchanted ground, oblivious of all the world beside.

"There was a happy sound in Lucy's cry, but James made no response. He hesitated a moment, and then said gravely:

"'Lucy, I don't like it.'

"The words fell on the girl as a shock of cold water might have done. The idea materialised in that glimpse of Geoffrey and Netta was one that had been familiar to her for days. She had known that it must be familiar to James also, and though no word had passed between them on the subject, she had assumed that his sympathies went with hers. Startled and indignant, with all that was most inflammable about her ready to fire up, she faced him.

"'What do you mean?' she said. 'It's charming! It's like a fairy tale. I never saw two people so much in love.'

"'There's a factor in most fairy tales,' he said, 'that we have all ignored. What do you think your father will say, Lucy?'

"'My father!' she said. 'Why of course he will say nothing! Why should he? It's for Geoffrey to choose his own wife, and he couldn't have chosen a sweeter one! I suppose you feel that, at any rate?'

"James hesitated. Lucy's colour rose.

"'To some extent,' he said; 'she is very sweet, as you say; very gentle and good. But to be honest with you, Lucy, I doubt whether she is quite the wife for Geoffrey.

And I doubt still more whether your father will think her so.'

"'If you can doubt upon the first point,' cried Lucy scornfully, 'you are welcome to doubt on the other. I don't know which is the more preposterous! Don't bring your doubts to me, at least! Take them to my father if you think they'll interest him.'

"She was facing him with her eyes flashing, all the gentleness of a few minutes ago swept from her. Suddenly she turned her head, listening eagerly.

"'Go!' she cried peremptorily. 'Go away at once! Netta's coming. I hear her. She's coming to tell me. Go away! Go away!'

"As though her insistence swept him before it, he turned and crossed the room. As he opened the door, Netta, hardly seeing him in her agitation, came in. He closed it quietly, and she threw herself into Lucy's arms."

Miss Lucas paused abruptly. She had spoken apparently with an intense realisation of the scene she described, and she seemed to come suddenly back to a sense of the actual condition of affairs. She glanced with an odd, half-startled defiance at Colonel Thurstan. He had sat, without the slightest change in his position, ever since she began her story, and he did not stir now. Then she glanced at the faces of her other auditors. They were all interested; on Mina Chester's face particularly, there was a singularly intent look.

"What a good audience!" said Miss Lucas. She spoke with a slightly excited laugh. "I'm rather long, I'm afraid. I hope it doesn't bore you?"

She looked at her hostess as she spoke, and Mrs. Ray answered promptly, and in a tone that fully testified to the truth of her words:

"I never heard a story that interested me more; please go on."

Miss Lucas laughed again rather recklessly, and resumed.

"I don't think I need tell you what Netta and Lucy said to one another," she said. "The women will imagine it for themselves, and for the men it doesn't matter. Netta had come to tell her friend that Geoffrey had asked her to be his wife. Her gentle nature was overflowing with its innocent happiness, and Geoffrey's sister met her confidences with the tenderness of unalloyed delight. In her boundless satisfaction, even the keen indignation that James's words had stirred in Lucy subsided. She could afford to treat them as the doubts of an over-cautious nature. And when they met again at dinner there was only a certain triumphant defiance in her manner towards him.

"She did not see her brother, though she made a hasty rush through the house in search of him, until just as the dinner gong sounded; and she had only time for a hasty squeeze of his hand and a look of infinite congratulation. The evening seemed very long to her, for her father, contrary to his habit, did not go to his library until, her patience exhausted, Lucy carried off Netta to bed. She expected that the two young men would come upstairs immediately, and she meant to waylay Geoffrey and draw him into her sitting-room to listen to all that she was longing to say. She did not try to detain Netta, who slipped away to her room, shy and happy; but waited alone, with her sitting-room door half open. Half an hour passed, however, before she heard the steps for which she was listening. They came up the stairs slowly, and no words passed between the two young men. Lucy darted to the door.

"'Come in,' she said, clasping both hands round Geoffrey's arm and drawing him into the room. 'Come in, my dear old boy, and let me tell you how delighted I am! You two were made for one another! And that's paying you a great compliment, sir; it's saying that the best girl in the world was made for you. Oh, Geoffrey, dearest, I am so pleased!'

"James had hesitated for a moment outside the door; then, apparently considering himself included in her invitation to enter, he had come in, and was standing by the door. But Lucy took no notice of his presence.

"For a moment Geoffrey made no response. Then he said heavily:

"'Thank you, Lucy. I'm glad you like it.'

"Something in his tone struck his sister. She drew a little back and looked into his face. It was very white, there was an odd, determined set about his mouth, and his eyes had a gleam that she had never seen in them.

"'What is it, Geoffrey?' she said. 'What is it?'

"He released himself from her hold and turned away.

"'Nothing,' he said slowly.

"'But there is something,' she returned, impetuously. 'I know there is! Geoffrey, tell me?'

"'There's nothing to tell you,' he said. His voice was low, and there was something dogged in it. 'Nothing that will make any difference to any one.'

"James moved. He came further into the room and looked at Geoffrey; his face, too, was troubled.

"'Geoffrey,' he said. 'Don't take it like that. It's no good. You'd better tell Lucy what has happened.'

"'If you think it's likely to interest her, I'll tell her by all means,' said Geoffrey. 'But since it makes not a particle of difference to any one, it doesn't seem to me worth talking about. My father doesn't approve of my engagement, that's all. He seems to have thought that I should wait for him to find me a wife. His mistake, that's all!'

"He turned as he spoke and walked out of the room.

"Thus left, Lucy turned to James; her face demanding the explanation for which her voice refused to ask.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'it's very serious. I warned you to-day that your father might not like what pleases you so much, but I never realised that he would absolutely forbid it.'

"'Forbid it!' she cried incredulously. 'Forbid Geoffrey to marry Netta!' She paused and changed her tone suddenly. 'Did Geoffrey tell father?' she said. 'How did he hear of it?'

"'He saw them in the long walk this afternoon,' returned James, meeting her eyes steadily. 'He stopped Geoffrey just now and asked him what it meant. Geoffrey told him that Miss Strangeways was to be his wife.'

"'And what did he say?' demanded Lucy breathlessly.

"'He spoke very quietly,' said James. 'I think he meant to speak kindly. But he said that such a marriage was quite out of the question.'

"'Why? Not because Netta is poor?'

"'Not for that reason only. My uncle is too generous for that. But he said—you'd better know it all, Lucy—that neither her birth, her position, nor her qualities fitted her to become Geoffrey's wife. He did not argue. He simply said that Geoffrey must give up the idea. And what he said he meant.'

"A long breath parted Lucy's lips, and then she spoke.

"'Give it up!' she said. 'Give it up when he's spoken to her, and she has said yes! My father must be mad! Geoffrey told him he never would, of course.'

"James looked at her for a moment, and then he spoke, sternly and decidedly.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'try to understand. If you allow yourself to be carried away by your own hopes and wishes you'll help to wreck Geoffrey for life. I wish to Heaven that this had never come about. It can come to nothing. Your father looks upon it as a mere boy and girl flirtation, and as such he will put his foot down on it remorselessly. We have had our own way so long that we have forgotten that he has some right to be consulted on a matter such as this. Geoffrey is his only son, and he will have to obey.'

"She had heard him out, but that was all. The last word had hardly passed his lips when her indignation broke its bounds.

"'Obey!' she said. 'Obey what is unreasonable, unjust, and unmanly! Obey an order that would break not only his own heart but Netta's too! Why, if I thought he could do such a thing I should be ashamed to call him my brother! And you expect me not only to countenance it, but to help in it! You expect me to persuade him that love means nothing, and is of no account, and that he is to put it away—as a child puts away a toy he's forbidden to play with! You don't know much of me, after all these years, if you think I'll ever do that!'

"I suppose there was something in her tone that stung him. He answered her hotly:

"'I have known very little of you,' he said, 'if you are as utterly unreasonable as you seem now. What I am trying to make you understand is this: that defiance is useless, and that the sooner its uselessness is realised the shorter the agony will be.'

"'Thank you,' she said. All her love and loyalty towards her brother! all her love and loyalty towards her friend! were in arms. Perhaps all that was most headstrong in her temperament was arrayed against him also. Her voice was ringing with passion. 'You haven't said a word to me upon the subject which, if I had been a man, I shouldn't have been ashamed to utter; to which, being a woman, I don't scorn to listen! Don't waste any more words in trying to make me reasonable. I'm proud to know it is useless.'

"He looked at her for a moment, and his lips were pale.

"'There's no more to be said, then,' he returned.

"He was turning away; his hand was on the door when she stopped him.

"'There is one thing more to be said,' she said peremptorily. 'I won't have Netta hear anything of this. Not anything at all. Do you understand?'

"He hesitated a moment, and then answered coldly:

"'Very well.'

"'You will not speak to her; you will give her no hint. Do you promise?'

"'If you wish,' he said in the same tone, and left the room.

"The day that followed broke for Lucy weighted with an undefinable load of oppression, and nothing she could say or do could bring about the easy quiet of the days that had preceded it. Geoffrey, though he dawdled through the hours exactly as he had done for weeks past, was absent-minded and uncertain. He had agreed with Lucy, gloomily, as to the desirability of keeping Netta in ignorance of the cloud that hung about them; but he made no effort to be much alone with her. James was stern and silent. As though the break-up of the relations of the past weeks was the precursor of actual change, he received by the morning's post a recall from his Colonel, which would oblige him to rejoin his regiment in two days' time; and he was necessarily occupied over his preparations for so unexpected a departure.

"Lucy herself was restless; tumultuous passions of every kind held possession of her and flamed undisturbed. Netta's gentle presence, and the necessity for self-control that it involved, was a constraint to her; and as the day wore on, the very timidity of her companion's manner began to jar on her strained nerves. It was a relief when she was left, late in the afternoon, alone in the drawing-room. She had hardly realised the satisfaction of solitude when Geoffrey came into the room and came slowly up to her.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'will you take care of her for me? I'm ordered off.'

"Lucy stretched out her hand quickly and caught his in a grasp of passionate sympathy.

"'Father?' she said.

"He nodded.

"'He sent me a note just now. Doesn't want to see me till I've had time to reflect. Wishes me to go away for a week, and come back in a sensible frame of mind.'

"'You can't give her up, Geoffrey!' cried his sister.

"Geoffrey's set lips relaxed into a smile.

"'I'll give her up when I give up living,' he said, 'not before. I'm going to Carsett,' he went on, naming a village about ten miles off, lying on the other side of the market-town. 'I shall get a week's reading."

For the first time since she had begun her story, Miss Lucas was interrupted. A half-articulate cry broke from Mina Chester, and she leaned forward suddenly, her clasped hands resting on the arm of Miss Lucas's chair, her eyes shining with an incredulous anticipation. Miss Lucas stopped short; meeting the excitement in the girl's eyes her own changed suddenly. A kind of wild regret flashed into them; a spasm of uncontrollable emotion passed across her face; and she rose impulsively.

"It's too sad a story, after all," she said unevenly. "Ah, far too sad a story for Christmas Day! I oughtn't to have begun it!"

Everybody spoke at once, of course, and there was a ring of strong personal interest in every voice. But it was Mina Chester's voice, low as it was, that seemed to dominate the confusion of sounds, as she said:

"But you will tell us the rest? Miss Lucas, you will tell us the rest?"

And it was to her that Miss Lucas turned, hesitating, trembling as if with reaction. She hesitated still, even with her eyes on the girlish face that was even agitated in its entreaty.

"You bargained that we should hear you out. As you have begun, should you not finish?"

It was Colonel Thurstan's voice. He had moved for the first time, and was looking at her with stern eyes. As she heard him Miss Lucas started violently, and faced him for an instant in silence. Then she turned again to the group about her.

"As you please," she said. "If your patience is not exhausted, I am not. Let us go on to the end."

CHAPTER VII.

MISS LUCAS GOES ON TO THE END.

THERE were dashes of vivid colour on Miss Lucas's cheeks as she sat down again. One hand was pressed on Mina Chester's fingers, but she seemed to be no longer conscious of the girl herself. She seemed to be hardly aware of the three pair of eyes which watched her, as though irresistibly attracted, as Stafford Ray, his wife, and Ralph Ireland prepared themselves once more to listen. She went on without pause or prelude, and her voice rang hard and strained:

"Geoffrey went away next day. His

father asked no questions as to his destination, and the dog-cart was ordered for him at two o'clock. Netta had been told that Geoffrey was obliged to read hard after the long holiday that he had taken, and that his father wished him to go away for a little while for that purpose.

"It had been a wild night; the wind had howled round the house, and the rain had dashed stormily against the windows. And every member of the party as they met at breakfast had something to say as to the impossibility of sleep under such circumstances. It was almost fortunate, it seemed to Lucy, that Netta came down so white and heavy-eyed, so evidently stupefied with severe headache, that she hardly seemed to realise the parting that lay before her. She was so feverishly anxious to assign the sleeplessness which had produced this effect to the noise of the wind and rain, that Lucy detected the subterfuge, and suspected that her friend had spent the night in grieving over Geoffrey's coming departure. Geoffrey himself was the one person who appeared to know nothing about the storm. He had slept heavily, he said. His sleep, however, did not appear to have been of a refreshing kind. His eyes were sunken and he was very pale. His farewells to Netta were said in a short half-hour that they spent together in Lucy's sitting-room. It was from her own room that Netta came down the stairs to the hall door when the last moment came. James was there, and Lucy, and several servants. It was with Lucy's arm thrown, carelessly apparently, round her, that Netta took her public leave. She was trembling like a leaf, and as the dog-cart disappeared from sight, Lucy felt her become a dead weight on her shoulder, and looking quickly down into her face saw that she had fainted.

"Everything that impetuous sympathy could suggest as a means of distracting Netta's mind from her separation from Geoffrey, Lucy did. She read to her, making her lie on the sofa meanwhile, and trying to soothe her aching head with every remedy her limited experience could suggest. She talked to her cheerfully of the future, tenderly of the past. And all the time her spirit was in a very tumult of indignation against the cruelty that could contemplate this parting as the beginning of the end.

"The two girls were alone all the afternoon. And after dinner — when Lucy's father did not come into the drawing-room — James made a brief excuse as to some business and went to his own room. It was his last evening at home. Lucy went to the piano to find some safety-valve for the tumultuous feelings that she could neither control nor define; and Netta, after sitting by the window listening, slipped out of the room. Lucy did not know that she was no longer there until, a step behind her making her start, she lifted her head to find herself alone with her cousin. He came and leaned on the end of the grand piano, looking straight before him. She began to play again instantly, ignoring his presence. But as the last notes of her music died away, he spoke.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'I'm going away to-morrow.'

"There was no answer. Lucy was playing again, but his steady tones came through the music and she stopped instinctively.

"'I can't take back what I said last night,' he said, 'though I'd give something to do it; but if I seemed hard, I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart.'

"She did not speak, and he went on:

"'Is it all to go for nothing! Can we not make allowances for one another? We don't agree. But are we to part in anger because of that? Lucy, there's trouble ahead, I'm afraid. Must we add to its sum by making trouble for ourselves?'

"She did not speak for a moment, and the dangerous quiet of her tone should have held a note of warning, as she said:

"'I don't understand you.'

"But he had little comprehension of women and their ways, and he was not warned.

"'I think you do,' he said. 'To me these weeks have been the happiest weeks of my life. I haven't been quite mistaken, Lucy, have I? You do know, don't you, something of what has been growing in me stronger and stronger ever since I became a man? You'll let me speak to you now?'

"'No.'

"Lucy rose suddenly and faced him, every rebellious fibre ajar and quivering. His voice vibrated with earnestness; even in her excitement she realised that. But there was a tone about his words, an assumption of a mutual understanding which set aside the subject of contention between them, that maddened her. Her repudiation of him and all that he suggested came from her in a fierce torrent.

"'I will not hear another word. You have said already infinitely more than you have any right to say. I don't know what you mean, and I don't want to know.

These weeks have brought me nothing—nothing but the knowledge that you and I have no single thought in common. If you have dreamed for a moment that I was earning anything else, that is only another proof, if I had needed one, of the distance between us. There's no mistake between us now, I hope; it won't be my fault if there ever is again.'

"She threw the last words at him passionately and incoherently, and before he could stop her, the door closed violently behind her.

"Lucy spent that night alternately insisting to herself that she was not lying awake, that she was not tossing feverishly from one side to another; and asserting that sleeplessness was the natural result of the just indignation that burnt in her against her cousin. She looked white and heavy-eyed to herself in the morning; and the fact served to add a fresh edge to her temper. Even Netta seemed to find her difficult to please, and avoided her. And even Netta's companionship was more than Lucy could bear. Just before lunch she ran out to the housekeeper's room with her hat on, and her sketching things in her hand.

"'I'm going out sketching, Mrs. Wilson,' she said. 'I can't wait till after lunch or the lights will change. Give me some cake or something to take with me.'

"She did not ask herself what it was that made it impossible to her to face that last meal that would precede James's departure. She only told herself fiercely that she hated him, and would not say good-bye to him. She did not ask herself what prompted her, when she found herself out of sight and hearing in one of the woods, to throw herself down on the smooth green path and cry till she could cry no more. She knew in her heart that she loved her cousin, and she hated herself for the knowledge. The fierce quarrel which his attitude with regard to Geoffrey's love story had caused, and the words he had spoken on the previous evening, had brought into violent collision her womanliness and her passionate pride. Her pride had conquered for the moment, but her womanliness was taking its revenge.

"She gathered herself up at last, and went on with swift steps until she emerged from the wood on the brow of a hill that sloped down to the high-road. The house lay to her left, out of sight; but the road itself was plainly visible, and sauntering along it, slowly and rather hesitatingly as far as Lucy could make out from that distance, was a figure that she recognised. It was Netta, in the full glare of the August sunshine. She was coming from the direction in which the house lay, and though the high-road was not one which they often took, Lucy concluded that she was going to see a village child, a little cripple who had taken a great fancy to her. Lucy was wondering vaguely why she had not waited until it grew cooler, when the sound of wheels, approaching rapidly from the same direction, made her glance towards the bend of the road round which Netta had come. The next instant she had stepped instinctively behind a tree, her heart beating painfully. It was the dog-cart from the house, and alone in it, driving himself with his portmanteau behind, was James. He overtook Netta and pulled up by her side, bending down to speak to her. No sound of their voices could reach Lucy, but she saw Netta look up as he spoke; saw her hesitate, and then break apparently into eager speech. She saw James pause, and then answer her. She saw him lean forward and help the girlish figure up to the seat by his side. Then she saw him touch the horse with his whip, and the two drove off together. A vague feeling of surprise rose up amidst the dull aching of Lucy's heart. Netta had wished to go into the town, seven miles distance; and James, who was going to the station there, had driven her in. That was obvious, of course, though where the groom was, and how Netta was to get home again, was not so clear. Lucy went straight home and went round to the stables.

"'Who drove Mr. James to the station?' she said abruptly.

"'Nobody, miss,' answered the man she had addressed. 'Thomas, he had to go into town this morning to see after the new mare, and Mr. James arranged he'd drive himself in, and Thomas could meet him at the station and bring back the cart, miss.'

"Lucy turned and went back to the house. The question as to Netta's return was set at rest, and yet her vague sense of surprise hardly seemed to subside. Two hours passed, during which Lucy found all her usual occupations unsatisfactory, and then a servant came into her room with letters.

"'The second post, miss,' she said. 'Thomas has just brought them.'

"Lucy took them carelessly.

"'Has Miss Strangeways gone to her room?' she said.

"'I didn't know Miss Strangeways was in, miss,' the woman answered. 'She went out directly after lunch, and I haven't seen her since.'

"'She has come back in the cart,' said Lucy. 'See where she is, Sarah, please, and tell her I'm here.'

"Sarah hesitated.

"'I beg your pardon, miss,' she said, 'but no one came back in the cart except Thomas.'

"Lucy looked up sharply; the vague surprise seemed suddenly to have developed.

"'Are you sure?' she said. 'She went into the town——' Lucy broke off. She wondered afterwards what it was that kept her from saying then, or later on, what she had seen from the top of the hill. 'Go and ask Thomas,' she resumed peremptorily, 'whether he did not meet Miss Strangeways; or—no, I'll go and speak to him myself.'

"Thomas had no knowledge whatever of Miss Strangeways. He had not seen her in the town, he had not met her on the road, and Lucy went slowly back to her own room.

"'Netta must be walking home,' she said to herself; 'or perhaps she has only gone part of the way and is coming back by some of the lanes. Her thoughts broke off abruptly, and she went by a swift, unreasoning impulse, to see whether Netta might not after all have returned, and be at that moment in her own room. Then, on the same impulse, she searched the lower rooms and the garden, but no Netta was to be found. She might come in at any moment, but as yet she had evidently not returned.

"But moments passed into hours and Netta did not come. Long before Lucy would own to herself any sense of uneasiness, she was wandering restlessly about unable to settle to anything. Surprise had merged itself into a sense of foreboding; a sense which took no definite shape in her mind, but seemed nevertheless to haunt her. The shadows grew longer; the summer afternoon merged into evening. Dinner-time came, and Lucy and her father alone met in the dining-room. The latter took no notice of Netta's absence, but he talked to his daughter more than usual, not noticing, apparently, that her words grew fewer and her manner more preoccupied as dinner went on. Dinner was over, and she had risen from the table when she said impulsively:

"'Father, Netta Strangeways has not come in.'

"He looked at her keenly, but uncomprehendingly.

"'Not come in?' he said.

"'She went out after lunch,' Lucy went on. Her colour rose suddenly. 'She went along the Kingsford road.'

"'Do you not know where she was going?'

"Lucy shook her head.

"'I was out,' she said hurriedly. 'I saw her from the top of Crows' Hill, on the Kingsford road.'

"The instinct that had kept her from saying more to the servant had grown stronger; she alleged no reason to herself for her reticence; but she knew that she intended to keep her further knowledge to herself.

"'She went out at noon to-day and has not come back.'

"Her father rose, and walked to the window as he spoke, and then looked round at his daughter.

"'Have you any reason to suppose that Miss Strangeways intended to leave you, Lucy?'

"Lucy understood him, and her spirit fired up.

"'No,' she answered, meeting his eyes boldly. 'No such reason exists. She knows of nothing that could make her wish to leave us.'

"She stopped abruptly, and the colour surged over her face.

"'You have said nothing to her, father!' she said quickly.

"He looked at her for a moment with a cold displeasure in his eyes. Then he made a gesture of negation.

"'Certainly not,' he said. 'It would never have occurred to me to address Miss Strangeways on a subject that lies solely between myself and your brother.'

"He paused, and then said:

"'She may have lost her way, or it is possible that she may have met with some accident. It will be dark in another hour. The men must go out and look for her at once. Ring the bell, Lucy.'

"The alarm was raised. The men about the place were sent out in parties of twos and threes, but the evening passed into night, and no tidings came. Nobody in the house went to bed; Lucy herself did not even go upstairs. She thought afterwards that the heart-sick anxiety of those hours, the dread lest every moment should bring some terrible news, was easier to bear than that which followed. There came a time when she realised that

during that dreadful night she had hugged her tangible fears as some protection from that haunting sense of foreboding which had no shape. It was two o'clock in the morning when, the second search-party having returned unsuccessful, she sent a groom riding with a note to the village where Geoffrey was staying. And it brought her a strange sense of desolation when the man returned with the news that Geoffrey, after spending the whole day at the little inn where he lodged, had started at eight o'clock in the evening for a night walk. It was a freak by no means uncharacteristic of him; and it was characteristic also that he should have left no clue as to his route, merely announcing his intention of returning on the following day. The groom had left the note, and until Geoffrey should return to claim it, his sister was powerless to reach him.

"But when the day broke on that night of weary suspense, Lucy privately despatched another messenger; this time he was sent to the nearest telegraph station, and he despatched a telegram from Lucy to James, bidding the latter return home at once.

"The day must wear itself away before that message could be responded to. But before the afternoon was over, though no Netta appeared, news of her came. It was news which changed open-mouthed lamentation, conjecture, and prophecy into whispers; news before which the vague foreboding in Lucy's heart rose suddenly, as her fears sank heavily to rest. The station-master from a little village about twelve miles distant came over to the house and announced that Miss Strangeways had taken the London train at his station at five o'clock on the preceding day; and the description he gave of her dress and appearance left no room for doubt but that his testimony was to be relied on.

"Lucy shut herself up in her own sitting-room on the man's departure. She knew now that she must wait, and she knew what she had to wait for. But how the hours passed, in what bewildered tumult of incredulous feeling, I think she never knew. Evening was drawing on again, and she was walking up and down her room, when a step on the stairs made her start, and she turned, facing the door as it opened to admit her cousin.

"He had come to her straight from his journey; he shut the door rapidly behind him, and came towards her.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'my dearest girl, why didn't you send for me at once?'

"The throb with which Lucy's pulses had welcomed him quickened into keen life the indignation with which she was possessed.

"'Because I wouldn't believe my eyes,' she said. Her tone rang cold and clear, and she made no attempt at any greeting. 'Because it seemed to me actually more possible, more probable, that she should have met with some terrible accident than that you should have acted as you have done. I don't want to tell you what I think of you. I cannot think of you at all. Tell me where she is?'

"Her eyes were fixed full upon him and she saw his face change. He hesitated a moment and then spoke gently.

"'Tell me what you know,' he said.

"Lucy clenched her hands. Her voice was hardly to be controlled as she answered:

"'I saw you take her up in the dog-cart on the Kingsford road, and I know that you drove her to Exton station. Where is she now?'

"But before the final question had passed her lips, a sharp ejaculation broke from James.

"'I drove her to Exton station?' he said. 'I did no such thing, Lucy. I drove her through Kingsford to the Carsett road, and there I left her.'

"'That's not true,' she broke out hotly. She saw James turn white, and it seemed to lash her into ungovernable passion. 'If you left her at the Carsett road, how did she get to Exton station, five miles away?'

"There was a moment's perceptible pause before James answered.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'you don't realise what you are saying. I cannot tell you how Miss Strangeways got to Exton station. I can only tell you, again, that I did not take her there.'

"A harsh laugh broke from Lucy.

"'You did not take her there!' she said. 'Well, you sent her there, we'll say. You provided her with reasons for going. You told her what you promised me you would not tell her. And you persuaded her—my poor little gentle Netta—that it was her duty to Geoffrey to go away. What did you hope to gain by it? Did you think for a moment that we should not find you out, Geoffrey and I? Did you think for a moment that you could keep her hidden from us? Ah, Geoffrey.'

"The door had opened as she spoke, and as she uttered her brother's name she sprang towards him as he stood pale and travel-stained, and broke into impetuous speech.

"'It's all right, dear boy. There's

nothing to be frightened about. You'll have her again to-morrow. We've only got to make him tell us where she is gone.'

"Geoffrey released himself from his sister's hold and looked across to James.

"'What does she mean?' he said hoarsely.

"'I think she hardly knows,' was the grim answer. 'For the first time in our lives Lucy seems to think my word to her requires proof. Will you tell her, Geoffrey, that Miss Strangeways came to you at Carsett yesterday afternoon at about half-past three?'

"'Came to me at Carsett?' echoed Geoffrey. He was speaking like a man half dazed by a blow, whose senses are only gradually clearing. 'Netta never came to me at Carsett yesterday. What do you mean?'

"A wild cry, half triumph and half agony, rang in Lucy's ears, and she realised that she herself had uttered it.

"'You see!' she said to James. 'What's the use of your trying to deceive us? What's the use of your trying to hide the truth? Listen, Geoffrey,' she went on vehemently. 'You've heard, no doubt, that I am the last person known to have seen her, and that I saw her going along the road towards Kingsford. That's true, but it's not all the truth. I saw her walking along the road first. Then I saw him'—she indicated James with a gesture as she spoke—'drive up behind her, alone in the dog-cart, on his way to the station. I saw him overtake her, stop, and speak to her. I saw her answer him, and then I saw him help her into the dog-cart and drive her on. And that same evening she went away in the London train from Exton station.'

"The pallor of Geoffrey's face was giving way. Its half-stupefied lines were breaking up. He looked from his sister to James, and back at Lucy.

"'But why?' he said, and his tone was still dull and uncertain. 'Why?'

"'If he were man enough to own to it at all,' broke out Lucy passionately, 'I suppose he would say he did it for your good. He has never liked your engagement, Geoffrey dear. He thinks it better that you should break Netta's heart and obey father. He thinks you can easily give it all up and find yourself another wife. He knew it was no use to say these things to you; he had proved it was no use to say them to me. So he broke the promise he had made me and said them to the one person with whom they could weigh. That drive was his opportunity. He offered to take her into Kingsford, I suppose; she was lonely, poor dear—oh, why wasn't I at home?—and she was glad to go. When he had told her that she stood between you and your father, between you and your future chances, do you think he had to propose twice that she should go away?'

"Geoffrey's hand closed like a vice round his sister's arm. His face was awake at last, and his eyes were gleaming. He turned them upon James:

"'Explain this!'

'James had not moved since Lucy began to speak. He stood now facing the brother and sister, his face set and white.

"'The sentiments that Lucy ascribes to me,' he said, 'need no explanation.' His voice was very hard. 'She is quite right. I have regretted your engagement to Miss Strangeways, and I have considered opposition to your father's will useless on your part. The facts of my meeting with her on the Kingsford road are these: I saw her walking in front of me, and I noticed that she looked hot. I stopped, and asked her if I could give her a lift. She was very white and nervous, and she hesitated. Then, to my great surprise, she begged me not to ask her any questions, not to think it strange of her, but to drive her as near as I could to Carsett. She must see you, she said. She was so agitated that the thought struck me that she must have heard what Lucy wished to keep from her, and was going to you for comfort. I took her up in the dog-cart, we drove into Kingsford, and I do not think three words passed between us. I took her to the top of the Carsett road, and there she got down. She thanked me, far more gratefully than was necessary, and I saw her go down the road as I drove back to the station. I neither saw nor heard more of her till I received Lucy's telegram this morning.'

"There was a dead silence. The two men eyed one another steadily. At last Geoffrey said slowly:

"'She never came to Carsett. I was about the inn all day. All the afternoon I sat out in front of the house, and the house is on the Carsett road. If she had come down it, I must have seen her.'

"James made no answer, and Lucy, no longer able to control herself, took up the word.

"'His evidence defeats itself!' she cried scornfully. 'He wants to make us think that she had found out something, and went away of her own accord. How could she

have found it out? You and I, he and my father are the only people who know. I did not tell her; you did not tell her; my father did not tell her. There was no means by which she could have known unless he told her himself.'

"Suddenly, James's grim impassiveness gave way. He took a step towards them, his face working, his eyes glowing.

"'Lucy!' he cried; 'Geoffrey! Good heavens, what are we all talking about! What does this all mean! You can't mean that you don't believe me! You can't mean, after all these years, that you don't take my word! Lucy?'

"But his appeal only hardened her. Perhaps because she was conscious for one moment of an intense desire to cover them with his word, and blot them out, the facts rose up before her, clear-cut and relentless.

"'There are the facts,' she said. 'We can't alter them. We can't do away with them. How is it possible we should believe you when you tell us black is white?'

"He turned from her silently to her brother.

"'Geoffrey!' he said.

"'She's gone,' Geoffrey answered. 'If you had no hand in getting her away, who had? When she is found again, when she tells us with her own lips that you are innocent, then we'll believe you, and not till then!'"

Miss Lucas stopped. Her voice died away suddenly, and the moment's dead silence that followed seemed curiously weighted. Nobody moved; nobody spoke. Then Miss Lucas said:

"But from that moment to this, Netta Strangeways' lips have never spoken again, either to Geoffrey or his sister. Geoffrey followed her to London that night, but at the London terminus the slender clue broke in his hand. He followed every shadow of a trace; he gave his every penny, his every thought, the best years of his life to the search, and it availed him nothing. Netta had disappeared, and the mystery of her disappearance—if mystery there was—was never to be solved."

Miss Lucas stopped again, and again there was the same dead silence. But it was broken this time by an odd thrill that seemed to run through her audience. Only Mina Chester did not move. She sat with her cheek pressed down on her hands as they rested on Miss Lucas's chair. It was Stafford Ray who broke the silence.

"Is that the end?" he said gently.

Miss Lucas sprang to her feet.

"The end?" she cried. "Yes! It's the end as far as I'm concerned, Mr. Ray. Ask Colonel Thurstan if you want to know any more. Every one was to tell a story, you know. I am only the beginner. Ask Colonel Thurstan for a story to-morrow night. Perhaps he will tell you such sequel as there is to tell."

With a simultaneous impulse, all the eyes hitherto riveted on Miss Lucas turned to Colonel Thurstan. But he looked steadily at Miss Lucas as he answered:

"If you care to hear the sequel, I will tell it."

CHAPTER VIII. COLONEL THURSTAN'S STORY.

"It's been the most exciting evening I ever spent, really. She made me feel as if I were all pins and needles! Stafford" —Mrs. Ray dropped her voice suddenly— "Stafford, I do believe it was her own story she was telling."

About half an hour had elapsed, and the Rays were in their own room. Mrs. Ray's face was flushed with curiosity, and even her husband, though he was as quiet as usual, seemed a little stirred. His wife's words had been spoken in the impressive tone of one who announces an original discovery; and he smiled slightly as he answered:

"The same idea had occurred to me, Kitty."

"And do you think," continued Mrs. Ray, "do you think it at all possible, Stafford, that James is Colonel Thurstan?"

"Colonel Thurstan's Christian name is John," said her husband.

"Yes, I know," returned his wife. "But do you think, Stafford, that she was using the real names? It seemed to me that she wasn't; neither for the people nor the places."

"It seemed so to me, too, strangely enough," Stafford Ray said, slowly "And something occurred to me in that connection which has answered a question that has exercised me mightily; namely, how you became possessed of two at least of your lodgers, my dear."

But Mrs. Ray was not attending to her husband's words. It was in pursuance of her own train of thought that she burst out indignantly:

"What a perfectly horrid thing for Colonel Thurstan to have done! I could not have believed it of him; could you, Stafford?"

"I don't believe it of him," said Stafford quietly. "There's a mistake somewhere, Kit."

"Mistakes don't last for years and years," returned his wife impatiently. "I wish I could think it was a mistake, I'm sure, because I have liked Colonel Thurstan. Will he tell his story to-morrow, do you think, Stafford?"

"I think he will."

It was obviously a foregone conclusion with all the party, when they assembled in the drawing-room after dinner on the following evening, that Colonel Thurstan's story would be told. The household had spent rather an unsociable day; and this was the first time they had all met. Miss Lucas came into the room with her face set into disdainful lines, but with a little quiver about her lips that belied the coldness of her expression. She sat down in a low chair with her face in deep shadow. As she entered, Mina Chester rose, hesitated, and then crossed the room to Miss Lucas, and sat down by her side. It was much the same movement as she had made on the preceding evening, but something about the girl's whole expression had altered in the course of the last four-and-twenty hours. All day there had been an absent look upon her face; she had hardly spoken; she had watched Miss Lucas's every look and movement; and as she moved to her side now, there was a confidence about the action which that one day seemed to have developed.

Ralph Ireland, sitting on the opposite side of the room, watched her face intently, and wondered wistfully of what she was thinking. On going to his room on the previous night, Ralph Ireland had bestowed no time on the consideration of Miss Lucas's story; it is doubtful whether his thoughts had been concentrated on it even while it was telling. But he had spent a long and sleepless hour on the consideration of something else. He had faced a conviction that had been lying dormant in him for several days; he had realised that he had met the girl who was for him the one and only woman in the world. This conviction was weighting his frank good nature with a humility and gravity that was new to it; and it was rather perplexing to Mrs. Ray, who was spasmodically trying to make conversation with him, while she wondered restlessly whether she should ask Colonel Thurstan to begin.

Colonel Thurstan himself was standing on the hearthrug talking to his host. But by degrees their conversation seemed to flag, and a silence fell upon the room. It was broken by Mrs. Ray.

"Colonel Thurstan," she said, and her voice was by no means so careless as she had intended it to be, "are you going to keep your promise to us?"

Colonel Thurstan turned instantly. His face had looked stern even while he chatted indifferently, apparently, with Stafford Ray. It grew very hard now, as he answered courteously:

"I am at your service, Mrs. Ray, whenever you like."

He sat down in the middle of the semicircle, paused a moment, and then began to speak coldly and distinctly.

"It is Miss Lucas's suggestion," he said, "that I should tell you such sequel as there is to the story she told last night. You will find me a less fluent narrator than she has proved herself, I fear. And perhaps it is not incongruous that whereas her part of the story began with the happiness of youth, the little that is left for me to tell you is shadowed from the outset by trouble and pain.

"The events of which you have been told broke up the happiness of the home in which they happened once and for all. The effect that the loss of Miss Strangeways had upon Geoffrey could not have been calculated upon, I think, even by his sister, or she would hardly have encouraged him as she did in the bitter resentment that isolated him utterly from his world. The strength of his feeling for Miss Strangeways had been under-estimated by his father, under-estimated, possibly, by his cousin; it was the love of a man, not of a boy, and of a man, as events proved, of character such as no one had suspected. Her disappearance, with the impenetrable darkness with which it was surrounded, developed his love into a sort of monomania. From the day when he left his home to follow the clue that took him to a London station he never returned to it. He refused to see or to write to his father; he refused all communication with his cousin. He passed away from all the concerns of his old life, concentrating himself on the one thought and interest that had swamped them all. If he could have believed that his trouble might have arisen solely out of a living error in the judgement of the woman for whom he was looking; if he could have believed that Miss Strangeways had left him solely on her own impulse, and that no clue as to her whereabouts had been withheld

from him except by herself; he would have suffered no less acutely, but he would have suffered less bitterly. He believed that he had been tricked; he believed that the object of his search was deliberately kept from him, and all the stubborn pride of his race hardened in him day by day.

"His father did not realise at first how grave was the mischief that had been done. For many months he looked upon his son's absence from home as the outcome of mere boyish sullenness. It was only very slowly that any doubt of his ultimate return presented itself."

Colonel Thurstan paused, and in the pause Stafford Ray said in a low, pleasant voice, without looking at him:

"It seems to be assumed that it was impossible that the father should have told his daughter what was not the truth when she asked him whether he had himself spoken to Miss Strangeways. The possibility of his having brought about her disappearance seems, after his statement to the contrary, to have ceased to exist for the other people concerned. And yet, to an outsider, the reason for this is hardly obvious. Surely it is not inconceivable that the father, having acted as he considered for his son's good, might have further judged it wise to conceal his action? And, after all, it was but one man's word against another's."

There was a quick, rustling movement from Miss Lucas's dark corner as though its occupant had leaned suddenly forward. But Colonel Thurstan went on without heeding it.

"Such a thing would not be inconceivable, as you say, Ray," he said, "in many cases. But in this case it was so. I cannot paint for you in a few words the character which made it impossible. I can only tell you that it would never have occurred to Geoffrey's father—as he told his daughter—to humiliate Miss Strangeways by bringing her personally into his discussion with his son. He considered that with his command to Geoffrey he had practically ended the affair, and it had ceased to confront him as a matter of any importance.

"I will not enter into James's feeling on finding his words set aside by the cousins he had known from infancy. But I may mention that in his utter bewilderment, seeking in vain for some clue to the mystery by which they were all surrounded, such a possibility as you have suggested did occur to him. He had only heard confusedly what had passed between Lucy and her father on the subject, and he determined to satisfy himself. It was one day nearly nine months after Miss Strangeways' disappearance; James had come to the house that was still nominally home to him on two days' leave, on an invitation, that was almost a command, from his uncle. The two were sitting alone in the dining-room after dinner, when Geoffrey's father mentioned him to James for the first time. He had been very silent, and he broke a long pause, abruptly:

"'James,' he said, 'where is that foolish boy?'

"James did not know. Geoffrey communicated with his sister, and his sister only.

"'He has wasted enough time over this childish business,' continued his father. The words were contemptuous, but the tone was uneasy. 'It's time he came home and settled down.'

"James paused for a moment, then he said:

"'Is it a childish business, sir? I'm almost afraid not.'

"For a moment his uncle made no answer. Then he said angrily:

"'What on earth made the girl behave as she did? That's where all the mischief lies! If she had not created all this mystery and set up his abominable obstinacy, he would have got over his boyish folly, as many another young fellow has done before him. It's all her doing.'

"'She must have heard by some means or other of your feeling on the subject, and she must have believed that she was doing the best for Geoffrey in leaving him as she did.'

"'Unless she meant to entangle him again in London and changed her mind!'

"James put the alternative aside with a gesture.

"'She was not like that, sir,' he said. 'The question is how did she hear of your feeling?' He stopped abruptly, and then said suddenly: 'I have heard that when Lucy asked you the question, you told her that you had never spoken to Miss Strangeways on the subject. I beg your pardon, sir, if I'm wrong—I've no doubt I am—but it has crossed my mind that you might have told Lucy this because you thought it better that she should know nothing of your action in the matter; and that it might, nevertheless, be from you that Miss Strangeways gained her knowledge.'

"There was a flash in his uncle's eyes

that James had never seen before, as Geoffrey's father answered instantly and sternly.

"'I do not lie,' he said, 'for any purpose, however admirable. I hardly considered Miss Strangeways as an active agent in the matter. If I had been responsible for the melodramatic muddle of her disappearance, I should not have stooped to conceal it!'

"There is such a thing as moral certainty, and James knew from that moment that no solution of the mystery lay with his uncle.

"It was from this time, I believe, that a just conception of the state of affairs began to dawn upon Geoffrey's father. He had been waiting many years for the time when his son should emerge from boyhood, and become such a man as he could understand. He had to realise gradually now that he had waited in vain; that the period to which he had looked forward had passed, while his eyes had been steadily fixed on the future. He had to realise that the son upon whom he had counted was a creature of his imagination only. And he had to realise finally that the son whom he might have known, was lost to him for ever. He was alone in the creeping sense of disappointment and desolation that came upon him. To his other child, though no words ever passed between them on the subject, he was, in one sense, the author of all the trouble that had fallen upon the house. She never thought that he and she suffered a common pain. Raging against her own, she ignored his, and set a barrier between them which her father was not the man to pass. It was not unnatural, therefore, that he should turn tacitly to the nephew from whom he could claim, as a right, a son's gratitude and a son's affection."

Colonel Thurstan stopped. His voice had vibrated slightly, but when he went on again it was very hard and monotonous.

"His nephew owed him everything, and no claim made by him could be set aside. For the three ensuing years the regiment to which James belonged was stationed about ten miles from his uncle's house. And during those three years no week passed which did not see him there five or six times.

"His footing, to all intents and purposes, was even more intimate than it had been in the old days, inasmuch as the master of the house consulted him and relied on him for many little offices. Only his cousin Lucy and himself knew how totally everything was changed, and how he stood outside the life that he had hitherto shared. That she endured his presence as an odious necessity, that she neither spoke to him nor looked at him except on sufferance, were facts that she never let him forget. And he was a fool, no doubt, inasmuch as his consciousness of them caused him the keenest distress. He had given no living creature cause, in all his life, to doubt his word. Yet she, to whom he might at least have looked for sisterly tenderness and trust, denied him both, and proved alike impervious to argument and assurance. He was a fool to think twice whether his presence pleased or displeased her, but his thoughts and his feelings were beyond his own control. He loved her.

"He hardly knew when it was in the course of the last of those three long years that he began to detect a new note in her tone to him. And when he did detect it, it was longer still before he realised what it was. One afternoon in the spring of that year, reluctant yet feeling that the task before him must be carried out, he went upstairs and knocked at the door of his cousin's sitting-room.

"'Come in,' she said.

"James knew from the tone of her voice that she had recognised his knock, and he went into the room to say what he had to say and to leave it as quickly as possible. Lucy was sitting by the table. She did not move, but her look as she faced him demanded an explanation of his intrusion.

"He went up to the table and stood opposite to her.

"'I will not trouble you for more than a moment,' he said. 'I have come to speak to you about your father.'

"She did not speak, and he went on.

"'I do not think him well. I have been uneasy about him for some time. I am sure he should be persuaded to take advice.'

"'He takes your advice from morning till night,' she said. 'What more can he want?'

"Her words and the tone in which they were uttered, though their unreasoning bitterness did not surprise him, disconcerted him. He paused a moment and then said:

"'I thought it right to tell you this, and to suggest that you should try to make him realise that he is very far from well. And there is another suggestion I feel bound to make. Your father is wretched for want of news of Geoffrey. Why do you never speak of him?'

"The colour swept into Lucy's face, and she rose and confronted her cousin.

"'Why does he never ask me about him?' she cried fiercely. 'Why does he never seem to care whether he is dead or alive? Why is he content to live as though he had no son? Because you have come between him and Geoffrey! If it hadn't been for you, Geoffrey would be here now. Now that he's gone you're taking all that ought to be his. Do you think I'll give him news of Geoffrey to be talked over with you, to be picked to pieces by you, to be made the worst of by you? Never!'

"She was shaking with passion, and James faced her for a moment in silence. Argument was useless; behind the wild injustice of her words he recognised her sisterly misery and her sisterly devotion. He left the room without a word.

"But from that time onward he knew that her jealousy of him for her brother's sake was one of the torments of her life, and if he could have done anything to spare her he would have done it gladly. This was impossible. Her father's state of health was, as he had told her, far from satisfactory. Unacknowledged grief and disappointment had told upon him heavily, and though he would not own to illness, he turned more and more, as his weakness developed, to his nephew. He took a dislike to his home, and as the summer drew on he rented a house for the season in Scotland; and James found himself practically compelled to obtain such leave as would allow of his going away with him.

"James had believed that nothing could be added to the already almost intolerable constraint of his position; but he found that he was mistaken. At home, his visits, frequent though they were, had been but visits; duty had constantly called him elsewhere. In Scotland his presence was perforce continual. Day after day he and his cousin were compelled to meet, knowing that the morrow would bring no change and no respite. It was the monotonous regularity of their intercourse that told so heavily; as a matter of fact, they saw, perhaps, even less of one another than they had done in England. The house in which they were established was situated in the midst of a mountainous district, and Lucy seemed to develop a passion for the wild hill country round. She was out of doors, when the weather allowed, from morning until night. She saw but little of her father; she chose to assume that James's society was all sufficient to him. Her cousin's words as to his health seemed to have made no impression on her, and she never noticed, apparently, how he changed in appearance. The symptoms that had alarmed his nephew developed rapidly during the first two months of their stay in Scotland, and at last there came about what James had long foreseen. A paralytic seizure broke down the appearance of health that Geoffrey's father had so determinedly kept up.

"It was a very slight attack, however, and in a few hours its more alarming effects had passed away. Lucy's father was able to speak, though somewhat imperfectly, when he asked for his daughter, and James went downstairs to fetch her.

"It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the September sunshine was flooding the drawing-room with light, when James opened the door. Lucy rose abruptly and came towards him. He noticed that she was looking pale, and he thought also that she had grown strangely worn and thin in the course of the last two months. A restless trouble in her eyes, which he had noticed there often lately, seemed to be making them larger and brighter than usual.

"'Well,' she said coldly, 'is he better?'

"'He is much better,' returned James. 'He wants to see you. Will you go up to him?'

"Lucy crossed the room abruptly without looking at James, passed him, and went upstairs. The bedroom door was ajar; she went straight up to the bedside. She started a little as her eyes rested on the changed face on the pillow, but she did not stoop to kiss it.

"'Are you better, father?' she said. 'Did you want me?'

"Her father moved his head feebly. James had stopped near the door, wishing to leave the father and daughter together, and he was out of sight from the bed. He heard his own name uttered now in his uncle's altered, difficult speech, and came slowly up to the bed.

"'I am here, sir,' he said.

"It was an invalid's fancy, evidently, and being satisfied as to his presence, his uncle looked slowly back at Lucy.

"'I sent for you,' he said laboriously, 'to tell you to write to your brother. Where is he?'

"There was a moment's dead silence; a moment that seemed so long that James, in spite of himself, glanced across at his cousin. To his intense surprise he saw that she was almost lividly pale; her hands were wrung together, and her lips were set. She did not speak, and the low, uncertain voice went on.

"'He is my only son. I may have only a short time to live. Whatever he may do afterwards, tell him that I charge him to come and see me now. Where is he, Lucy?'

"Still she did not speak. Her silence began to take effect upon her father. He tried to draw himself up upon his elbow, stretching out one hand to James for help.

"'Why don't you answer me, Lucy?' he said. The quiet command of his stronger days was lost now in the irritability of weakness. 'You are the only person with whom he has chosen to communicate. Why don't you tell me where he is?'

"He was growing excited, and excitement was dangerous. James spoke in a low, warning voice:

"'Lucy, you must tell him.'

"She looked up for the first time. Her eyes met her cousin's, and the fact seemed to goad her almost beyond her own control.

"'How can I?' she cried. 'How can I tell him what I don't know myself?'

"'You don't know?'

"The words did not come from James. Her father had raised himself.

"'You don't know where he is? He has cut himself off altogether?'

"He let himself fall back heavily, turning feebly towards James.

"'You are my son, then,' he said. 'I have no other.'

"Before James could look up he heard a rustle beside him, and he knew that Lucy was gone.

"Nearly two hours passed before he could leave his uncle's room, and then he called a servant and asked where her young mistress was.

"'She's gone out, sir,' was the reply. 'I saw her go in a great hurry nearly two hours ago.'

"The news did not surprise James, but as he looked up at the sky, it made him uneasy. The signs of storm were gathering fast, and though it was only six o'clock the light was becoming dull. He knew what the confession to which Lucy had been driven must have cost her. He guessed something of the misery which the fact must have been causing her, perhaps for weeks. He loved her, and the thought of her pain was wringing his heart. That she should be wandering among the hills, oblivious in her unhappiness alike of time and weather; caught in a storm, perhaps exposed to the dangers that darkness created on some of the more precipitous mountain-sides near, was more than he could endure. He knew which were her favourite routes, and taking at random the wildest and most lonely of these, he set out to look for her.

"The storm broke; and as he pressed on against it up the hillside, the whole country seemed to be swept by driving sheets of rain and mists driven before the wind. A kind of frenzy took possession of James. The thought that he might miss her; that the gathering darkness or mist might hide her from him, even if she were within his reach; and that she might have to spend the night shelterless, maddened him. He strode on, stopping now and again to shout her name. The mist was rising round him on every side. He had reached the summit of a wild, desolate crag, when he saw crouched against the rock as though for protection from the rain, a few yards from him, a woman's figure. He reached it unheeded in the noise of wind and water; and as he stood beside her at last a strange calm fell on him. He leaned down and touched her on the shoulder.

"She sprang to her feet, and stretched out both her hands to him.

"'James!' she said. 'Oh, James, James, is it you?'

"He took her hands into his own and held them. He knew that in her welcome there was nothing personal; he knew that she was wet through and frightened, and that she clung instinctively to a man's strength and a man's protection. He drew her into a more sheltered corner and made her sit down.

"'The wind isn't so cold here, Lucy,' he said. 'Don't be frightened. You are quite safe.'

"She was clinging to his hands convulsively.

"'Can't we go home?' she said. 'James, can't you take me home?'

"The world below them was blotted out to their very feet in a thick white mist. James knew that not an inch of path would be discernible, and he knew that on that side of the mountain a false step might mean death.

"'Not yet,' he said. 'The mist may lift when the storm passes. We must wait.'

"She shuddered, and sank down on a stone, hiding her face in her hands. She sat so for some time, evidently enduring with such patience as she could muster. The rain stopped gradually and the wind began to subside. As though the quiet had arrested her attention, she raised her head suddenly. The mist had crept up and

was about them now, and it was growing dark. She looked at her cousin with her eyes wide and startled.

"'James,' she said, 'when the mist clears it will be dark. Shall we have to stay here all night?'

"'I am afraid so.'

"She did not speak, but a long sigh came from her. There was a silence. Darkness came rapidly, and when they could no longer see each other's faces, Lucy broke into sudden speech.

"'James,' she said, 'what am I to do? What am I to do? I don't know where he is! I haven't known where he is for nearly three months now! He hasn't written to me; he hasn't sent me a line, and I feel as if I should go mad sometimes with sheer anxiety.'

"'You would have heard if anything had happened to him,' said James.

"'Not necessarily,' she said, quickly. 'He doesn't always go by his own name. But I don't think I'm afraid that anything has happened. He has been nearly as long as this once before without writing. It's the thought that he shouldn't care to write; it's the feeling that I have lost him; that I can't touch him, or help him, or do anything for him; it's the feeling that he must be so dreadfully changed not to care how much I suffer, or how lonely I am, that I don't know how to bear. Oh, James, what can I do? What can I do?'

"Perhaps he was wrong, perhaps even then, with the broken voice of the woman he loved ringing in his ears, with darkness between them and the stillness of the night growing all round, a stronger man than he would have said nothing. I can only say that James was not strong enough.

"'Lucy,' he said, 'let me help you. Let us make it up as we have made it up so often before, and do our best for Geoffrey together as we used to in the old times. Lucy, it's a mistake that's come between us; nothing else. I love you. Can you not give me back trust, at least? Can't we begin again?'

"The quiet fell about them again, unbroken for a moment. Then he heard a long, strangled sigh.

"'Oh!' she whispered. 'If I could! If I could!'

"He leaned towards her, though he could not see her.

"'Why should you not?' he said. 'Lucy, don't you care for me a little?'

"'I do,' she said brokenly. 'I did.'

"'Then you believe me,' he said. 'You believe me when I tell you solemnly; when I call to witness to the truth of my words all that I hold most sacred; that there is nothing that need stand between us. That I am as innocent of that with which you charge me as yourself, or Geoffrey.'

"He heard her rise with a low cry. He stretched out his hand instinctively to keep her from taking any step that might lead her into danger, and with his grasp on her arm she spoke.

"'I can't!' she cried, 'I can't! There were the facts. I said with Geoffrey when they were fresh to me that I would never believe you till Netta told me herself that what you said was true. I hold to what I said then, and I shall hold to it for ever.'

"Still with that touch on her arm, he guided her back to her seat. He did not speak; the night wore on, and still the silence between them was unbroken. He heard her shiver once, and put his coat about her. Once he thought he heard her sobbing. At length the dawn broke; she moved stiffly and feebly when he helped her to her feet, and as they made their slow and difficult progress down the hillside he spoke only such words as were necessary for her guidance. It was no surprise to him when they came within sight of the house to see that the front door was open, and that figures were moving about. But the face of the old manservant who met them on the threshold, struck him with a sudden chill. He glanced at his companion's white, exhausted face, and made a sign enjoining silence on the old man. But he was too late.

"'Thank Heaven you're come, sir!' he said. 'Miss Lucy, we've looked for you everywhere! Oh, sir, my poor master!'

"Lucy had gone on quickly through the hall, unheeding. But on the last word she stopped suddenly.

"'Is my father worse?'

"The old man turned to James, and as their eyes met, James went to his cousin.

"'Go up to your room, Lucy!' he said. 'I will come to you presently. Go up to your room!'

"But she put his words aside peremptorily.

"'I want to know how he is, first,' she said. 'William, why don't you answer me?'

"'You'd better do as Mr. James says, miss,' was the faltering response. 'He'll come and tell you presently.'

"'Come and tell me,' she echoed sharply. 'Come and tell me what? Is he dead?'

"She read her answer this time in the

faces of the two men. Worn out with the long night of exposure, the shock was more than she could bear. Without a sound she swayed helplessly for a moment, and her cousin caught her in his arms.

"The bare facts as they stood were sufficiently painful. The second stroke of paralysis which had ended the disappointed life of Lucy's father would have overtaken him in any case, sooner or later; and there was little reason to believe that matters had been accelerated by the non-appearance of either Lucy or James on the previous night. But the events that followed; the events that added bitterness to inevitable suffering; were the result of an accident, or perhaps, I should say, an oversight, for which James never forgave himself. It fell out thus. Every private paper found in her father's room, was by him taken untouched to Lucy. It was her right, and Geoffrey's, to look them over, and in that right James knew himself to have no share. He took them to her on the day before the funeral; and she looked up as he entered the room, pointing to a letter that she had in her hand.

"'He has written,' she said. 'Geoffrey has written to me at last. Too late, you see.'

"Her speech was hard and monotonous, as though the statement were wrung from her by her misery. James paused a moment, then he laid the papers down by her side.

"'I found these in your father's room, Lucy,' he said. 'Will you look them over and see if there is anything that Mr. Davison ought to have?'

"She drew them towards her, and began to open them with quick movements, as though glad of the semblance of occupation. He hesitated a moment and then turned away. As he did so, she lifted her head and recalled him. Her face was quite white. She held a sheet of letter paper in her hand.

"'Did you know of this?' she said.

"He crossed the room, took the paper she held out, and glanced at its contents. As he did so he realised that he would have given ten years of his life to keep them from his cousin.

"It was the rough draft of a will, drawn out in shaking characters, just recognisable as her father's writing, and bearing the date of the day on which he died. It revoked all the testator's former wills, and left the house and land only to Geoffrey, bequeathing all his father's money in two equal shares to Lucy and James. A moment passed before James had sufficiently mastered himself to speak. Then he looked his cousin in the face.

"'I knew nothing of it, Lucy,' he said, 'and it is so much waste paper.'

"He was in the very act of tearing it across when she stopped him impulsively.

"'No,' she said fiercely. 'It represents my father's will. Do you think either Geoffrey or I will dispute it? As far as you are concerned, what is written there shall be carried out.'

"James controlled himself forcibly.

"'It's not legal, Lucy,' he said. 'It means nothing. No use can possibly be made of it.'

"'Legal or not,' she retorted proudly, 'we shall consider ourselves bound by it. Be sure of that.'

"He paused a moment.

"'I can't discuss the matter further with you now,' he said at last. 'It's not the time. Mr. Davison will make you understand the position better than I can. I will only tell you that no power on earth could induce me to touch one shilling of your father's money.'

"He turned away as he spoke and left her alone.

"But nothing that he had hoped from time, nothing that he had hoped from the arguments of her father's solicitor, came to pass. Lucy remained absolutely impervious to argument or to entreaty. She wrote to Geoffrey on the subject, and all that Mr. Davison could extract from him was a brief note authorising his sister to act for him. She took possession of the half share of his property left to her by her father, dividing it with her brother; and the other half was left to James. He never touched it, he never will touch it.

"There is very little more to tell. The death of Lucy's father broke up the home; and broke up the difficult and painful position of the past three years. James exchanged into a regiment on foreign service, and left England for many years. Lucy settled in London. He heard from time to time of her welfare through Mr. Davison. He heard to his unspeakable relief of her inheritance of a considerable fortune. And he heard also of her brother.

"He heard of Geoffrey as always wandering about the world; wandering aimlessly and restlessly, long after any clue to Miss Strangeways' whereabouts afforded him an object. He heard that he had sold the old home that had come down to him through so long a line of ancestors. He heard that his silences grew longer and

longer, until at last he ceased to communicate even with his sister. Then he heard that all trace of him was lost. The trio who had played together as children, the trio bound together by so many common memories of joy and sorrow, was broken up and scattered by the far-reaching influence of a fatal mistake."

Colonel Thurstan's deep, grave voice stopped, and there was a silence. There were tears in Mrs. Ray's eyes, and her husband seemed to be absorbed in thought. Ralph Ireland stared meditatively at the carpet. Miss Lucas in her corner sat absolutely motionless. Only Mina Chester knew how tightly her fingers had clasped themselves over her hand, and the close pressure was as unconsciously returned.

It was Stafford Ray who spoke at last. He rose.

"Thanks, Thurstan," he said. "You have brought us to bedtime. Miss Chester," he added lightly, evidently with an instinct towards breaking up the strained feeling of the moment, "we shall look to you for our story to-morrow night."

CHAPTER IX. TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

THE room at High Firs that went by the name of the library deserved its title only traditionally. The books that had once lined its walls had long since been sold. But it was a very pleasant room still; and the fact that some of the original substantial furniture had been left there, had rendered it habitable without much exercise of ingenuity on Mrs. Ray's part.

It was the afternoon of the day following that on which Colonel Thurstan had told his story, and the library had two occupants: Ralph Ireland and Miss Lucas; somewhat uncongenial companions, it might have seemed.

Miss Lucas did not often sit in the library; what impulse had prompted her when the party broke up after lunch, and Colonel Thurstan and Stafford Ray went out together, to settle herself there rather than in the drawing-room, no one could have said. She was sitting by the fire now with a book in her hand, on which her eyes were fixed steadily, but she had not turned a page for nearly an hour. Her face was set into cold, defiant lines, and she was very pale. Ralph Ireland was at the writing-table, engaged in somewhat hasty and perfunctory correspondence. He finished at last, pushed his chair sharply back, and rose; then he hesitated. He came slowly towards Miss Lucas as she sat by the fire.

"Do you know at all what Miss Chester was going to do this afternoon?" he said abruptly and a little awkwardly.

Miss Lucas started, as though her thoughts had been far away.

"Miss Chester?" she said. "No; I didn't see her all the morning, and she said nothing at lunch. In fact, she was rather silent, I think!"

Her shrewd, kindly eyes were fixed full upon him with a smile in them, and Ralph Ireland coloured as he answered:

"She didn't speak a word! I mean, I really don't know. I thought, perhaps, she might have told you what she was going to do."

Miss Lucas looked at him for a moment in silence; her clasped hands resting idly on the book on her knee. At last she said gently:

"Mr. Ireland, is it the real thing with you?"

He made no pretence of not understanding her. The colour faded out of his face as he said simply:

"I love her with all my heart."

"Ah!" It was a sympathetic little sound, and under its influence Ralph Ireland turned away, and looked straight down into the fire as he rested one hand on the mantelpiece. "And she?"

"I don't believe I've got a chance," he said hastily. "I'm not fit to black her shoes, and she knows it."

Miss Lucas laughed softly.

"I shouldn't be so very sure of that," she said. "Both facts seem to me to be open to question. She is a little shy and wild, Mr. Ireland; you must be very gentle and cautious. But I don't think you need despair, yet, at all events."

"You don't?" The young man turned to her impetuously: "You don't, really? Oh, I say, Miss Lucas——"

He stopped abruptly. The door had opened as he spoke, and he saw Miss Lucas's face suddenly change and grow very cold and hard. The new-comer was Colonel Thurstan, and as he advanced she rose, without another word to Ralph, and swept past him out of the room.

Ralph Ireland was too much absorbed in his own emotions to feel more than the most transitory surprise. Miss Lucas had said enough; she had given him the word of hope for which he had been hungering; and, amiable young man as he was, her subsequent presence or absence was a

matter of slight importance to him. He received Colonel Thurstan somewhat incoherently and dashed out of the house, acting on the impulse to work off his excitement in the open air. He resolved heroically to act instantly upon Miss Lucas's advice, and to take none of the routes which he knew to be favourites with Miss Chester.

The weather had changed at last. The rainy spell had come to an end, and bright, frosty weather had succeeded it. And while Ralph Ireland had been getting through his correspondence in the library, Mina Chester had slipped out alone. Her walk this afternoon had led her in a direction she had never taken before, bringing her finally to the brow of a hill. Behind her, stretching down the easy slope and away for some distance, was woodland; the bare trees creaking and shivering mysteriously even in the sunshine. Before her the hill on which she stood sloped down to the high-road that wound away to the town seven miles off; and to her right, though out of sight, lay High Firs. Mina Chester stood leaning against the trunk of a tree, gazing steadily down at the road with eyes that seemed to see nothing.

Mina had seemed to court solitude throughout the day. She had only appeared among the party at High Firs when breakfast and lunch practically compelled her to do so; and she had then sat pale and quiet. The eyes that gazed so fixedly at the white, frost-lined road had an uncertain, pitiful look in them; and the corners of the grave mouth drooped. She turned at last, with a little catch of her breath, and began mechanically to retrace her steps. She went down the hill into the wood, pursuing her way until her progress was stopped by a gate; then, instead of opening it, she laid her arms along the top, and let her face fall forward upon them with a little sobbing moan.

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity!"

She stood there motionless, unconscious of the cold, unconscious that the short December day was drawing to its close. She did not even hear when a man's step came quickly up the path towards her; she did not see Ralph Ireland as he stopped abruptly a few yards from her. The young man's eyes were fixed upon the girl's bent head, and his honest face turned very pale beneath its sunburnt colouring. He stood there motionless, and still she did not move. At last he made a movement as though he would have gone away and left her. But his heart failed him. He stopped abruptly and spoke.

"Miss Chester," he said, in a low uneven voice, "is there—isn't there anything I can do?"

With a violent start Mina Chester lifted her head, and as he saw her tear-stained, troubled face, he took two impulsive strides to her side, and spoke again before she had time to utter a word.

"Oh," he said, "won't you tell me what's the matter? If you knew how awfully sorry I am."

Mina smiled faintly.

"I can't tell you, thank you," she said simply. "It isn't—it isn't my own trouble exactly."

Brief as her answer was, there was nothing about it repellent or distant, and Ralph Ireland coloured with pleasure as he answered impulsively:

"That's all right. I mean, I'm awfully sorry for what troubles you, but I'm awfully glad it isn't yourself."

"Thank you," said Mina again.

The trouble through which she was passing, vicarious though it might be, seemed to have softened her strangely, and as though it had created in her an instinctive longing for sympathy, she added:

"It's something I've got to do, too; something I don't quite know how to do."

Her voice quivered a little, and Ralph said desperately:

"Isn't it something I could do for you? It—I—I should only be too pleased, I do assure you."

She shook her head with another watery smile.

"Thank you very much," she said. "But there's nobody but I who can do it—nobody but I in the whole world."

The words were followed by a pause. They were still standing one on either side of the gate. The silence was broken by Ralph Ireland diffidently, almost awkwardly.

"Would you rather I went away?" he said. "It was so like an idiot like me to come thundering down upon you. I expect I oughtn't to have spoken to you, but I couldn't help it."

"It wasn't your fault," she answered; a little touch of colour had stolen into her white cheeks. "It was I who was foolish, and it was very kind of you to—to speak to me."

"It's getting rather dark," he suggested. "May I—may I take you home, Miss Chester?"

"Thank you," she said.

He opened the gate for her, she passed through, and they went on down the path side by side.

It promised at first to be but a silent walk. Nearly a quarter of an hour had passed before Ralph Ireland spoke.

"Miss Chester," he said, his frank voice sounded nervous and constrained, "would it bore you frightfully if I were to talk about myself a little?"

She had turned to him with a slight start. Her eyes were still troubled, but the distress in her expression seemed to have passed into abeyance for the time.

"I shall be—very pleased," she said rather shyly.

"I don't want to say much," he said. "Only I can't bear that you should think I've been quite such an idle chap as you suppose. You see, it's like this. Things aren't quite the same out in Australia as they are here. I don't mean to say that a man oughtn't to settle steadily into business there as well as here, or that he isn't a far better fellow if he does it. But what I mean is that there really is a good deal of work to be got, out of harness, so to speak. A man who doesn't want to be tied down needn't live an idle life by any means. There are lots of men I've been with out there who would tell you I'm not a bad fellow to work. They would, indeed."

He had spoken very earnestly, looking straight before him. Miss Chester did not turn to him, but she spoke quickly and gently, almost deprecatingly.

"I'm quite sure of it," she said, "if you say so. I didn't speak at all kindly the other day, I'm afraid. I know one may make dreadful mistakes if one decides only on one's own observation. I—I quite believe you, Mr. Ireland, and I oughtn't to have spoken at all."

"Don't say that," he returned eagerly. How is a young man to recollect injunctions to caution when he is met with wholly unexpected gentleness? "It was most awfully kind of you, and I know there is a great deal in my life that would seem like idling to you. But I mean to settle down to hard work, I do indeed. I'm only wondering how I shall begin."

"Do you mean to go back to Australia?" she asked.

"Yes, no—I don't know," he replied rather incoherently.

She looked round at him instinctively; their eyes met, and as a sudden soft rush of colour flooded her face, Ralph Ireland stood still suddenly, and she stopped, too, perforce.

"Miss Chester," he said desperately. "If—if it could only make any difference to you one way or the other, I'd do exactly what you told me. I'd go in for anything, I'd settle to anything, here or there. I don't suppose there's the shadow of a chance for me—I don't suppose you care a straw whether I go or stay, or what becomes of me, but—oh, Mina, I do love you so."

She had shrunk back a little against the hedgerow and was looking up at him, her lips parted in startled, almost incredulous surprise, but with something that was not surprise and not repulsion struggling to life in her eyes. She made no attempt to stem the torrent of his speech, but as he paused she spoke.

"We don't know one another," she said rather breathlessly. "You can't have grown to care in such a little while! It isn't possible——"

"It is possible," he answered vehemently. "Time! What has time to do with it? And as to knowing one another, I know you enough to love you. That's all! I know you enough to know that I would do anything to please you, that I would do anything to win your love again. Mina, can't you give me a little in return?"

She was trembling from head to foot, and his vehemence seemed to sweep her into resistance.

"Oh, wait!" she cried. "I'm not like that. I can't get to know people and love people in such a hurry. I can't believe it could be real. Why, a month ago we'd never seen one another. Ah, what grows so quickly can't have deep roots."

"Sometimes," he averred boldly. "Why, the roots have been growing all my life. They're as strong as I am. Oh, Mina, can't you try to love me? I will wait; I will wait as long as you like; I will wait till you know me through and through, and I'll try every hour to be better worth the knowing. Or is it," his voice changed and faltered, "or is it that you do really know me too well? That you know I'm not good enough for you—you know you could never like me?"

She turned away, and her hands were wrung tightly together as the next words came from her, almost, it seemed, against her will.

"No," she said. "Oh, no, no, it isn't that! Only—it is so soon!"

There was a moment's silence, and then Ralph Ireland spoke again, humbly, but very resolutely.

"Then I shall wait," he said, "and till you say that there's no hope for me I shall hope. Don't think I'll bother you—I won't, indeed. Now let me take you home."

CHAPTER X. RALPH IRELAND'S STORY.

"WHO is going to amuse us to-night? Somebody is prepared with a story, I hope."

The speaker was Miss Lucas, and the words were uttered abruptly directly the party assembled in the drawing-room after dinner that evening. The dinner that was just over had filled Mrs. Ray's soul with content. It had been the gayest that had yet taken place, and its gaiety had originated solely in Miss Lucas's flow of spirits. She had talked persistently, laughing alternately at and with every member of the party, Colonel Thurstan alone excepted.

Her flow of conversation had ceased abruptly during the interval that preceded the appearance of Stafford Ray and his men guests in the drawing-room; and her words on their appearance were uttered with a rather forced gaiety. Mrs. Ray answered her, cheerfully and a little dubiously:

"You are sure you are not tired of stories? If anybody thinks that ordinary talk would be pleasanter to-night, do let him or her say so."

Before any one else could speak, Miss Lucas answered in the same strained tones:

"Nobody thinks so, I'm sure," she said, "the stories have been so successful, haven't they?" She laughed a rather high-pitched laugh, and then went on hurriedly: "Mina, it's your turn, I think. Are you ready?"

Mina Chester was sitting rather apart; she had been very quiet all the evening, but the little air of severity which sometimes gave a certain hardness to her face was absent. She sat resting her chin upon her hand, gazing dreamily into the fire; and there was something indescribably soft and womanly about her unconscious preoccupation. She started nervously as Miss Lucas addressed her, and a wave of bright colour swept across her face.

"Oh, no," she said, "I'm not, indeed. I will tell a story—some time. But I'd rather not to-night. I—I couldn't."

She spoke pleadingly, and with considerably more agitation of tone and manner than the occasion seemed to call for. She had hardly finished speaking when Ralph Ireland threw himself into the breach.

"I'll tell a story to-night, if Miss Chester doesn't want to," he said. "That's to say I'll try, you know, if nobody minds. But I'm afraid I shan't make much hand of it."

He felt, as he caught the instinctive look of gratitude that Mina Chester turned on him, that it was not of the faintest consequence whether he made "much hand" of it or not. He was only vaguely aware that his proposal had been received with enthusiasm by the rest of the company; and it was not until he found himself confronted by his silent and expectant auditors that he fully realised the position into which he had heroically thrust himself. He accepted it, however, with praiseworthy promptitude and energy.

"I can only tell a rough kind of story," he said, "because I've only lived a roughish life, and I haven't had any adventures worth speaking of, either. I hadn't much share in what I'm going to tell you about, only I saw it all.

"It was about three years ago, and I was knocking about out there in Queensland seeing life, and doing a spell of work whenever it came along, and at shearing time I was up at a sheep station right away in the bush, shearing for a man named Jackson.

"The shearing was a big affair; there were lots of us at it; and we had a very jolly time one way and another. But there was a man about the place who didn't seem to fit in anywhere. He was an Englishman, and he was a gentleman; there was no mistake about that. He didn't seem to be in any want of money; but he didn't seem to be travelling because he wanted to see things, for he took no interest in anything that came along. He was a tall fellow with white hair, though he can't have been more than five-and-forty. He had blue eyes that never seemed to see anything he looked at. Some days he would be about all the time, leaning against the doorway of the shearing shed, and looking on for hours at a stretch without speaking. Sometimes he would disappear for a day or two at a time, coming back as quietly as he went. He went by the name of George—whether it was his Christian name or his surname nobody knew.

"I don't know how it was, but he and I got chummy. It wasn't what one would have called being chums with any other man; we didn't talk much, but we used to have long smokes together. He never told me

anything about himself, and yet I got to know him.

"He never spoke of any future, and as the shearing drew to an end, I began to wonder whether we should go our different ways when it was over, and, perhaps, never knock up against one another again. I made a nice little pile at that shed, and I meant to go down to Townsville. I had some notion of going to some diggings and taking up a claim, later on, so I thought I'd 'hump my drum'—that's Australian slang for going on foot—to the nearest railway. It seemed likely that several of the other fellows would be going too, but it turned out at the last that only two of them settled to go my way, and these two were not just the sort I should have chosen as companions for a four or five days' walk. I don't know where they had come from, but I hadn't taken to them. They weren't altogether above-board, and there had been one or two nasty little affairs over cards. They'd both lost heavily all the time, and were leaving the station not much richer than they came to it. Their names were Carter and Maclean. I wasn't pleased when I found that we three were to tramp together, but one must take the rough with the smooth, and I didn't bother about it at first.

"The day before we were to start, however, Jackson asked me to do him a favour. He had some opal specimens that he wanted taken down to Townsville—very fine ones they were, and a number of them. They were worth altogether many hundred pounds. He'd known me, on and off, since I was a little chap, and he wanted me to take them down and hand them over to his agent. Of course I said I would, all right; and it was only when it was all settled that I began to bother a bit about my travelling companions. I went up to Jackson's house in the evening to get the stones, and I put them away there and then in my belt with my own swag. And it didn't make me more comfortable to find Carter and Maclean hanging about the place when I came out.

"There was to be a roaring supper down at the bachelors' quarters by way of celebrating the end of the shearing, but I didn't turn in at once; I thought, perhaps, George would be about. And by-and-by he came sauntering down towards me.

"'Off to-morrow, youngster?' he said.

"'Yes,' I answered. 'Four o'clock in the morning sees us off.'

"I wanted to tell him my bother; I hadn't known it till I saw him, but that was what I had meant when I waited about for him. It was quiet enough where we were, but I spoke pretty low, too, as I said:

"'Look here, has Jackson told you that I am taking some opals down to Townsville for him?'

"He nodded.

"'Yes,' he said. 'And you're going with Carter and Maclean.'

"I hadn't thought that he knew so much as their names.

"'Yes,' I answered. 'It's all right, of course, but I wish there were some more of us.'

"'None of the other men going that way?' he enquired.

"'No, worse luck,' I returned.

"George was smoking. He pulled away at his pipe silently. Then he said:

"'Townsville will do for me as well as any other place, youngster. We may as well join forces.'

"Now, of course I'd often wondered where George was going when the shearing was over. But the possibility of his having no fixed plans somehow hadn't occurred to me, and I was just about as surprised as I was pleased. Still I didn't like the idea of his making a journey like that only to keep me company, and I said so, straight out.

"'It's no end good of you,' I said, 'but I'm not going to let you make a journey like that just to help me out of a bother. After all, you know, these fellows are probably on the square all right. And even if they're not, they don't know——'

"'Yes, they do,' said George quietly.

"'How?' I said, startled.

"'Mr. Carter did us the honour of listening when we began our conversation,' he returned. 'He's only just retired.'

"It was rather a facer and it staggered me for a moment. I hesitated a moment, and then I said:

"'How far would it take you out of your way?'

"'I haven't got a way,' he said, and his voice sounded awfully sad and strange. 'I like you, youngster, and it's settled.'

"Carter and Maclean looked sulky enough next morning when we mustered for our start. They went out of their way to seem surprised when they found that George was going with us, and it fell out naturally enough that though we all tramped together we dropped into pairs. We used to start at four o'clock in the morning and

walk all day, and jolly hot it was. And at night we lit our fire and made our damper, and lay down in our rugs. It was George's suggestion, after our first day, that he and I should not sleep at the same time; he had had his eye on our companions, and I made out that he didn't care about their looks. We did about thirty miles a day, and it was pretty stiff work; on half rations of sleep, too. But all the same, I enjoyed that first three days of our tramp more than I'd ever enjoyed anything in the same line.

"George was a queer companion—there was no doubt about that. Sometimes he would go for an hour at a stretch without speaking a word. But sometimes he would talk; talk as I had never known him do at the station; and then I've never known a fellow so well worth listening to. He had been all over the world, it seemed; he knew every place and every people under the sun almost, and knew them like a man who has lived among them, not like the ordinary sight-seer. And yet he seemed to stand apart from all the life he talked about, just as he had stood apart from all the life up at the station. He didn't seem to take any interest, or to have any standing anywhere. I couldn't help understanding, as I got to care about him, that he was a man whose life had gone wrong.

"What he talked of most, though, was England. He was always going back to the same subject—a certain English county and all its characteristics. He never said so in words, but I think he must have known that I understood it was his own native place, and I hope he didn't mind. He pulled himself up once, and said suddenly:

"'I wonder why I keep on yarning to you about the old country, youngster? It's not my way. I've been talking of things I haven't even thought of for years!'

"The stifling heat we had come through seemed to have passed over. We had come along over an ironstone ridge to the foot of a bit of a slope, when we noticed something odd about the ground before us. Instead of being all dried up and baking, it was moist and muddy; and, as we looked on ahead, we could see that the mud grew thicker and a bit slimy, too. We all knew what it meant, even without Carter's exclamation.

"'By Jove!' he said, only these aren't the exact words he used. 'The water has been here!'

"We pushed on with one consent to the top of the rise before us to see how the land lay beyond. I think what we did see was the most desolate sight I ever saw. I don't know whether you know that it happens now and again in Queensland that a hot season breaks up very suddenly with tropical downpours of rain, in which more inches of water fall in a night than London knows in a whole year. When this happens the dried-up land refuses to soak in the deluge poured on it; and, with every small hill gully draining water into the main creek, the water quickly rises into a flood and comes rushing down over the plains. The flood lasts for days — sometimes more and sometimes less—and then the water gradually retreats again, leaving what we were looking at as we stood on the top of that rise. It was a wide sweep of plain, backed by the hills from which the water had come. Right up to our feet and stretching away for miles in front of us was a sea of black mud, smothering every trace of vegetation, and bearing grim traces of the ruin which the water had brought about; dead sheep, broken trees, broken fences. It was varied here and there by pools of water, and through its midst the creek ran full and strong. Away on our right the water still lay in a great sheet; blue and shining in the brilliant sunshine that seemed somehow to make the ruin it lit up more dreary.

"Maclean, who was an old hand at bush-travelling, and knew his way about better than Carter, greeted the prospect before us with a speech that I won't repeat. What he said, in substance, was that we should have to go about ten miles out of our way. He was turning off sharp to the left when George stopped him.

"'Wait a bit,' he said, 'there's a house down there by the water. We're going to see if they want any help first.'

"It was the regular bush hut, one-storeyed, of course, equally of course with a verandah. I had noticed already that the water had come up to a good height round it. And I thought it odd that there was no one stirring about to do what might be towards putting things to rights.

"Maclean hesitated for a moment as though he were not quite sure whether he'd go in with Carter and make a row or not. Finally, he shut his chum up roughly, and said sullenly to George:

"'All right; don't let's be all night about it, then.' He evidently meant to keep in with us.

"George had received Carter's objections in perfect silence—that kind of silence that means immovable resolution—and he turned as silently now and began to walk towards the hut. I followed him, and Carter and Maclean followed me. It was beastly walking, and that is the truth. We were a long way over our ankles in mud, and as we got further on, into the middle of it, there was a horrid faint smell of damp and decay. There was no sign of life as we drew near the hut, and the entrance was shut fast. It was barred, apparently, inside, for when George tried it it did not yield. There were some pretty curtains in the windows, and the creepers, the tops of which flourished luxuriantly while the lower foliage had been soaked away by the water, had been planted and trained evidently with a view to making the place pretty and homelike. It looked awfully strange and desolate, somehow, in that sea of black mud. George paused a moment, and then he went round to the skillion — that's a kind of lean-to shed which is always part of a Queensland hut. The door of the skillion was shut, too. But when George gave it a strong push it yielded, and we stood on the threshold looking in. It was a little bit of a place, and it was as clean and orderly as anything you ever saw. The only thing that seemed to have got out of its place somehow, and to be at a loose end, was a little bit of an apron—a pretty, pink, woman's thing that was lying on a stool. George and I were looking in silently, when Carter and Maclean came up behind us.

"'They must have cleared out,' said the latter. 'We've had our walk for nothing after all, you bet.'

"It was George who stepped across the threshold, and we followed him. But coming to the doorway into the adjoining room he stopped abruptly; and looking past him from the skillion behind we saw what he saw, and stopped likewise, as a low ejaculation broke from Carter and Maclean.

"It was a small room, and everything that can be done to make a Queensland hut pretty and bright had been done to it. The walls were lined with calico and decorated with coloured pictures from old Christmas Numbers of the 'Illustrated,' and so on. Beside the ordinary hut furniture—table, stools, billy-can (that's the cooking-pot, you know)—there was a deck-chair drawn into a corner by the French window, and close to the chair, lying stretched out on the floor, was the figure of a woman in a cotton frock.

"Bush life brings one face to face with all kind of odd turns. I'd found myself confronted with some fairly unexpected emergencies before then, and Carter and Maclean must have been in hobbles of all sorts. But we were all of us as much thrown out of our reckoning at that moment as though we'd never been out of the beaten track in our lives. I think it was the homelike look of the place. It would have been different if we'd found the woman out in the bush; but there, with all her own surroundings about her, there was something so awfully womanly about her, and we seemed such a rough lot of men.

"George moved first. He pulled off his cap, went quickly across the room, and knelt down by her side. He touched her hand and felt her heart. Then he said sharply:

"'Get some water, one of you. Make haste!'

"I had noticed a water-butt in the skillion, and when I got back with some water George had got his flask out.

"'Dash some over her,' he said; 'over her face. That's right. Now again. Steady.'

"He was moistening her lips with brandy as he spoke. Maclean and Carter were still standing in the doorway looking on sheepishly.

"She must have been pretty far gone, I suppose; for at first our remedies didn't seem to touch her. She lay there between us, white as death and as still. She was quite a girl, very fair and slight, and her features were frightfully thin and sharp-looking, though they were pretty, too. At last her face quivered. Her eyelids trembled a little, and then they slowly lifted. She looked straight up into George's face with a pair of sunken, dim, blue eyes. He touched her lips with the brandy again, and then said in a low voice:

"'Don't be frightened. Can you tell me where you're hurt?'

"She hardly seemed to understand him for the moment. Then she seemed to get a little stronger.

"'I'm not hurt,' she said faintly. 'I—there was nothing to eat.'

"We understood the outline of what had happened well enough, then. And the facts in detail, which she told us by-and-by, when George had brought her round a little with such rough food as we had with us, were these:

"She was an English girl, and her name was Lettice Darrant. She had come out to Queensland with her brother about twelve

months before, and he had become what is called a 'free settler;' that is to say, he had taken up land under Government. They had had a roughish time of it at first, though she didn't say much about that. There's no telling what the loneliness of selections like that is to people who have never been used to it. They were nearly thirty miles away, there, from any other station. They never saw a soul but one another, except that the brother used to take his dray every four months or so to a station some five-and-twenty miles off to get rations; and most days, when he was out looking after his few sheep, Miss Darrant was left quite alone.

"About six days before we found her the dry season had broken up, as we knew, and her brother had gone out to see to his fences, sheep, and so on. It grew late in the afternoon, and she was getting anxious about him. She had wrapped a shawl about her head, and had gone out on to the verandah in spite of the still falling rain, to look out for him, when she saw something moving far up the creek. She put up her hand to shade her eyes from the light, grey and dull as it was, and as she did so she became aware of a faint, rushing, far-away noise that frightened her though she didn't know why. Then, gradually, she saw that the moving something was water. She saw it come rushing down, spreading as it came, and she stood there, paralysed with terror, until it was within a few feet of the little rise on which the hut was built. Then she rushed inside, shut and barred the doors and windows, and saw the water gradually surround her, rising till it was all but on a level with the verandah, and she was quite alone in what looked like a world of water.

"She had never heard of the Queensland floods, and she was utterly unprepared, utterly bewildered. But during that terrible first night, as the darkness came down, and she could see nothing and hear nothing but the lapping of the water round the hut, there was no room in her mind for anything but agony about her brother. The water had come from the direction in which she had been looking for his return; what the chances were, for and against him, she had no idea. She only knew that the world had become a waste of water; that he had been out quite alone; and that he could not swim. People say that any certainty is better than suspense. I don't know whether that's so or not. Miss Darrant didn't tell us much about that night; and she didn't tell us, either, how she felt next morning when she stood at the window with the grey light shining on the water, and saw—swept by on the swollen current of the creek among a mass of wreckage, each fragment of which told its own story of devastation—the body of a man who still wore knotted round his neck the red silk scarf that she herself had tied there only the morning before.

"I don't think she realised her own position during the day that followed. It was the next morning, when she woke after an hour's sleep and went to get herself something to eat, that it occurred to her that the time had come round for her brother's expedition to the station and that the rations were almost out. I don't think she cared at first. It was only by degrees, as she came to the last of everything in the hut, that the awful desolation of her position began to get hold of her. The waters were going down by that time. They had subsided until they lay in a great lake on one side of the house only. But there was no help for her in that. To have wandered out into the bush, even if she could have crossed the tract of deep, black mud through which we had come, would have meant certain death; and Miss Darrant preferred to face the end, if it must come, in her own home. It had been drawing very near when we arrived. I think we all realised that we were only just in time.

"It was natural enough under the circumstances that we should feel—Carter, and Maclean, and I—that the lead in the affair belonged to George. He had brought us there; he had practically saved Miss Darrant's life. And it was natural, too, that Miss Darrant should understand this at once, and turn to George from the first. She seemed half dazed and heart-broken, though she made no fuss, and said very little. She had pretty, shy ways, and she thanked us all, as there wasn't the least need to do; but it was to George that her eyes finally returned as she looked from one of us to the other.

"It was towards George, also, that Carter and Maclean began to look, sulkily enough, as the afternoon began to draw on. They'd been out, prowling about the place, when they came into the skillion and called George. He went out to them, and, as I went after him, I saw Miss Darrant's eyes follow him nervously.

"'Look here, now,' Maclean began, speaking in a low, rough voice, 'how long are we going to stay here?'

"It was a pretty awkward fix we were in, there was no doubt about that. If we were to leave Miss Darrant and send a waggon for her from the nearest station, it would mean three days more of that horrible desolation for her, and it would be a very tight fit for everybody as far as rations were concerned, for of course we weren't carrying much more than enough. But the only alternative, of course, was to take her on with us, and that seemed to me so utterly impossible as to be hardly an alternative at all. George looked from Carter to Maclean without speaking. I think he hadn't quite made up his mind. And Carter said, without lowering his voice, like the brute he was:

"'It's an infernal nuisance, take it anyway. The best thing we can do is to clear out as quick as we can, and hand the job over to somebody else.'

"'What rations have you got left, youngster?' said George, turning to me.

"Before I could answer, however, there was a little rustling sound from the room behind, and Lettice Darrant stood on the threshold of the skillion. She was holding with one hand to the doorpost, and her great blue eyes, as she fixed them appealingly on George, were dilated and terrified.

"'You won't—you won't leave me?' she said. 'I can't stay here alone; I can't, I can't! I won't be any trouble; I won't, indeed. Only take me with you.'

"Her nerve was broken. The self-control with which she had told us her story was all gone; shattered, obviously, by the thought of a renewal of the deadly loneliness of the past week. Her face was working pitifully as George moved to where she stood and said very gently:

"'I'm afraid you don't realise what that would mean. Bush-walking isn't fit for you.'

"'It will be,' she cried, not loudly, but with a kind of desperate ring. 'I am very strong! I am, indeed. If—if you could wait till to-morrow I could walk any distance. But if you leave me alone again I shall die.'

"George was looking straight down into her eyes, and I think he believed her.

"'We will not leave you,' he said. 'Go back into the other room, Miss Darrant. We shall wait till to-morrow.'

"There was a pretty average row with Maclean and Carter after that. And he told them they were free to go their own way and we'd go ours. They went off by themselves to consult, and when they came back, with a sullen acceptance of affairs as they stood, we both knew, George and I, though we didn't speak to one another about it, what it was that made them stick to us. They would have left us there and then if it had not been for Jackson's opals; and we knew that we were in for a tussle of some sort before we came to our journey's end.

"I had seen George with women before up at Jackson's, I had seen him always what you would call courteous, but not in the least interested; and I wasn't prepared, somehow, for his ways with Miss Darrant. I don't know whether it was the helplessness in which we'd found her; or whether it was his sense of her awfully lonely position with four men; or whether it was her shy, gentle, uncomplaining ways; but from the moment when we found her, he just seemed to take charge of her, think for her, and help her unceasingly.

"Bush-walking is stiff work for a woman; plucky as she was, we only did fifteen miles a day, and what those fifteen miles cost her, though she never complained and never hung back, I didn't like to think. We couldn't make it less, because of the rations; as it was, it would just double the time the rest of our journey should have taken us, not counting the day we had spent at the hut; and on the second day George put himself and me on half rations without saying anything to the other two. But she would never have got along at all, I am quite sure of that, if it hadn't been for his constant encouragement and care for her. I don't know how it was that Miss Darrant first learned to distrust Carter and Maclean; first got to understand that something was up between them and us. But she did understand it in no time, though she didn't say anything about it. I believe she found it out somehow, though I can't explain quite what I mean, through her reliance on, and gratitude to, George. By the third night, I think she knew quite as well as we did that something might go wrong at any moment, though she didn't know what it was; and because she thought, naturally enough, so much more of George than she did of me, she thought it was he who was in danger.

"We had divided that night up into short watches. The nearer we got to our journey's end, the more necessary it was to be on our guard; and, all being well, we had only one more night of it before us. That belt of mine with the opals in it seemed to get heavier and heavier every hour. George took the first watch, and, pretty well worn-out as she was, I saw, before I went off to

sleep, that Miss Darrant meant keeping awake, too. She was awake still, when George roused me up quietly when the time came, and took his turn to sleep."

Ralph Ireland paused; his frank face was troubled, and he looked straight before him, fidgeting nervously with a paper-knife that lay beside him on the table.

"I don't come out well in what's coming," he said a little hoarsely. "I know that. I don't think I should have told you the story if I'd ever known any one else half so well worth talking about as George.

"It was deadly quiet out there in the bush, dark as pitch, except for our fire, which gave a flickering kind of light. Maclean and Carter were on the other side, still as logs. I heard George's breath grow even and deep; I heard Miss Darrant sigh faintly and move ever so little as if she were too tired to lie still. And then it was all quite silent. It's no excuse, of course, but I'd only had four hours' sleep for six nights now, and I'd been walking in the air all day; and I think when a man's on half rations, it takes it out of him a bit. The long and short of it is, I went to sleep—I must have gone off quite suddenly, for I never realised that I was even drowsy. I came to myself with a girl's shriek ringing in my ears, to see Miss Darrant shaking George by the shoulder, as two dark figures crawled stealthily round the fire towards us.

"We were up in a moment, all four of us, and it was a hand to hand struggle. It was Maclean who had fastened upon me; he was a bigger man than I am, and when I felt him feeling for something in his belt, I thought it was all up with me. It would have been all up with me if it hadn't been for George. He'd got Carter down on his knees, and the brute, who was a coward as well as a bully, had done showing fight, and was only struggling to get away, when George saw how things were going with me. Next instant Carter had disappeared into the darkness, and Maclean realised that it was two to one. He gave up the game at once, and was turning to follow Carter when Miss Darrant, with some wild idea of helping us, stirred the fire into a blaze. The sudden light outlined her figure sharply against the background of dark sky, and a savage imprecation broke from Maclean. His hand went quickly to his belt; I saw George spring forward between him and Miss Darrant; there was a crack and a flash, and the next instant George was lying on the ground and Maclean had disappeared. Miss Darrant was quicker than I was; almost before I realised what had happened, she was down on her knees by George's side, and she looked up at me with a face I shall never forget.

"'He is dead!' she said. 'He is dead!'

"He wasn't dead, but I saw as I knelt down beside him that he was dying fast. He opened his eyes as she spoke, and made a feeble gesture to stop me as I tried to find out where he was hurt.

"'It's no use,' he said. 'Leave me alone.'

"The firelight was flickering on their two faces, and as I saw the look in Miss Darrant's eyes, I stopped moving and didn't speak, just holding him up in my arms.

"'It's for me,' she said. Her voice was low and hoarse, somehow. 'You're dying instead of me.'

"He turned his eyes towards her, and a little smile touched his white lips.

"'That's all right,' he said. 'I'm glad to get out of it; glad it should happen so! Don't mind.'

"He moved slightly and tried to lay his hand on my arm.

"'You'll get her safely to Townsville?' he said. The words were coming very feebly with long pauses between. 'She's safe with you.'

"His voice died away, his breath came in great gasps. I couldn't speak. I wouldn't look away from his face, but I knew that Miss Darrant's cheek was pressed down upon his hand. Then he spoke again.

"'I've liked you, youngster,' he said. 'Don't forget me! There's my ring, take it.'

"Then, without any struggle, he was gone.

"The dawn came at last, though I thought it never would, and it showed me Miss Darrant's face as she crouched there on the ground, not much less white, and not much less still, than the face of the man who had died for her. I'd heard a lot about the beauty and the peacefulness of death, but I'd never seen it before I looked down at George's face with the grey light creeping over it. I knew I wasn't any good, and I went away for a bit and left her alone with him.

"I buried him that afternoon, digging a rough kind of grave in the sand of the creek close by. I took his ring off his finger, and tried to do what was right,

and when it was over I fetched Miss Darrant. She just knelt down by the grave and I did the same; and I think we both said a prayer though neither of us spoke a word.

"We got to Townsville the next evening, and I took her to some friends there. I took Jackson's hateful stones to his agent, and I wished I could have pitched my own money into the sea. There was no need for George to ask me to remember him. I wasn't ever likely to forget. And when I saw Miss Darrant to say good-bye before she left Townsville, I knew that she'd never forget either."

Ralph Ireland's voice had shaken suspiciously as he uttered the last words, and as he finished he rose abruptly, and with an incoherent exclamation about bedtime, went hastily out of the room. Nobody smiled, and a few minutes later the party broke quietly up.

CHAPTER XI. MINA'S STORY.

It was a lovely winter's afternoon, but Colonel Thurstan, as he stood at the window of the library, looking out, hardly seemed to be aware of the beauty before him. He was quite alone, and he had been standing in the same position with a heavy, settled preoccupation clouding his kindly face for many minutes. He moved at last, suddenly and abruptly. He went out of the library, crossed the hall, and opened the drawing-room door. He paused a moment on the threshold as if to assure himself as to its occupants, and then went deliberately in, shutting the door behind him. Miss Lucas was there alone, and as she saw him she rose quickly, and was moving towards the door without a word, when Colonel Thurstan stopped her.

"One moment, Anne," he said, and his voice was very stern and sad. "I won't trouble you for more than that, but I've come here on purpose to speak to you."

She paused instinctively, turning to face him with a quick, haughty movement, and he went on:

"I only want to tell you that I have determined to go away. I shall speak to Ray to-night and leave to-morrow."

"What shall you tell him?" she demanded quickly.

"Simply that business calls me back to London," was the cold response.

Miss Lucas made no answer; she turned away as though, his statement being made, she wished to consider the conversation at an end. But she did not go out of the room; she walked absently to the table and began to turn over the leaves of a book. Colonel Thurstan did not leave the room either, though he seemed to have said all he had to say. He moved to the fire and stood looking down into it. Two or three minutes passed in total silence, then with an oddly simultaneous impulse each moved as though to speak to the other.

They were interrupted, however. The door opened and the maid appeared with tea, followed almost immediately by the rest of the party.

The sun had set, but the afternoon sky was beautiful; and though it was growing dusk in the drawing room, Mrs. Ray's suggestion that the lamps should be brought was negatived by more than one voice. The fire blazed cheerily, its light dancing on the walls and throwing flickering shadows here and there about the room; and after tea was over and the twilight deepened, no one seemed in any hurry to move, and no one seemed inclined to break the silence that had gradually fallen on the party.

It was Mina Chester's voice that broke it at last. She was sitting looking out of the window at the fast fading light, and she did not turn her head as she said in a low voice:

"I am to tell a story some time, am I not? Mrs. Ray, may I tell it now?"

Everybody had started, more or less, or stirred as she spoke, as though his or her thoughts had strayed far away in the quiet. Mrs. Ray hesitated a moment, then she said tentatively:

"I think it would be very nice—that is, if every one else likes."

"I should like it of all things," said Miss Lucas's voice. "It's an excellent suggestion."

Still Mina Chester did not look round. Her hands were clasped together tightly on her knee, and Ralph Ireland, glancing at her, saw that her face looked very pale in the half light.

"I shan't be long," she began; "it's—it's quite a short story. It's about—my mother."

She paused a moment with a little catch of her breath, that only Ralph Ireland noticed, and then went on again with a hesitating tone:

"I was always with my mother when I was little. She died when I was fourteen,

and we'd never been apart for a day till then. She hadn't any companion to speak of except me. My father—he died a year later—was a great deal away from home, and, though I know he meant to be kind, I fancy now that he didn't quite understand how much a woman wants besides a comfortable house and enough money. My mother was ill for a long time before she died, and she got, through being weak I think, to be a little afraid of his silent ways. She used to stay in her own room a great deal, and I used to stay with her. She used to make all kinds of little occupations for herself that would keep us there; and one evening she made me bring her a box of old papers that she said she wanted to sort and put in order. They were not very interesting: bills, and receipts, and letters from people I knew quite well; but by-and-by I came to an old sheet of writing-paper, so old and brown that it must have lain in that box for years. I showed it to her and asked her what it was, and she took it into her hands and looked at it with such a strange expression in her eyes, almost as though she were looking at a ghost. Then a little sad smile just touched her lips.

"'I didn't know this was here,' she said dreamily, 'I thought I'd destroyed it long ago. What is it, Mina? Why, it's only a note, my child.'

"'It's very old, mother,' I said.

"She smiled again. 'Yes,' she said, 'it is, very old—as old as your mother's first love.'

"I suppose all girls, when they can't help seeing that their father and mother are not quite the same kind of person, wonder how they came to be married. I had wondered often, and I somehow knew at once it wasn't my father of whom she was speaking; and I suppose I looked curious, and excited, or something of that sort, for she glanced down at my face—I was kneeling at the table by her side—and a little flush came into her pale cheeks as she touched my hair with her fingers.

"'Do you want to hear about it, Mina?' she said; 'well, there's no harm now. It's such a long, long time ago, and I think I should like to tell you.'

"I sat down on the stool at her feet, and she began, speaking rather dreamily, and now and then stroking my hair. This is what she told me:

"Her girlhood had not been a very happy one. She had been always too shy and too gentle to meet the world on its own ground—she didn't say this to me, but I had known it for a long time—and she had had no one to take care of her and protect her as she ought to have been protected. She was a governess, and she was not happy in her work or fortunate in her surroundings. She had one great friend; a girl with whom she had been at school."

Mina Chester stopped for an instant; then she continued very softly.

"Although so many years had gone by," she said, "my mother's love for her friend was as tender on the day when she told me the story as it was when the two were girls together. She lingered over the past as she told me of their friendship with a kind of loving gratitude which I can hardly put into words. It must have been one of those friendships which grow out of unlikeness, I think, for her friend was everything that my mother was not; high-spirited, impulsive, self-reliant. My mother went to see her once or twice for a day or two at a time at her home in the country after they left school, and she told me that she was never so happy in her life as when her friend asked her, one year when she had been ill, to go to her for a long visit while she grew strong again."

Mina Chester paused. Her breath seemed to have failed her for the moment. But an extraordinary hush had fallen on the room, and nobody spoke. The only light now was the light of the fire, and the figures revealed by the fitful glow might have been so many statues of attention. A little quivering sigh parted the girl's lips, and then she went on again:

"My mother had been practically alone with her friend when she stayed with her before. Her friend had no mother, and the father seemed to count for very little in his daughter's life. My mother had seen a cousin of her friend, and she knew that there was one brother; but it was not until she went there for that long summer visit that she and the brother met. I think my mother looked back upon the weeks that followed that meeting as upon a dream, from which all the pain of waking could not take its happiness as it lay always in her memory. They were both very young, she told me, and he told her afterwards that he had loved her from the moment when he saw her. If my mother had told him all that was in her heart, she would have said the same to him. Six weeks passed by; they were constantly together, and asked for nothing further.

Then he spoke. He asked her to be his wife, and she gave him her answer, feeling that life had nothing more to offer. And then, just as she knew what happiness meant, it all came to an end.

"She never could quite understand, she told me, though she went over it all again and again afterwards, when it was or how it was that she first became aware of something wrong. But before the day that followed her engagement was over, she knew that the perfect serenity of the atmosphere about her had changed. He was the same—the same, at least, to her; but he seemed preoccupied and depressed. His sister was as affectionate as any girl could be; but there was that about her which made my mother feel, even more strongly than she felt it with him, that something had happened. She was too shy to ask what was the matter. She did not speak of her fears even when her friend told her lightly, and as a matter of little consequence, that her brother was under orders from his father to read hard for the rest of the vacation; and that he was to go the next day to a little village ten miles away, on the other side of the market town, for quiet and concentration. But the news seemed to chime in with the trouble in her heart. She accepted it quietly, almost without comment indeed; but the conviction that there was something behind, something of which she was not told—a conviction fostered, even if it was not wholly created, by her friend's pronounced carelessness of manner as she told her the facts—was not to be set aside; and by the time night came she was miserably restless and uneasy.

"It was a wild night, and the rain was lashing drearily against her windows as she sat down in her room and tried to reason herself out of the vague fears that troubled her; tried to assure herself that there was nothing more in the separation that the next day was to bring about than appeared upon the surface; tried to persuade herself that she was sleepy, and that the night would soon pass. But it was of no use, and she gave it up at last. The wind was howling and shrieking round the house; she was wide awake and very unhappy, and she determined to take a book and try to read. If she had acted differently then, if she had gone to bed and to sleep that night, all her life after might have been different."

Again Mina paused; or rather her voice seemed to die away quiveringly into nothing. The hush that had fallen on the room had grown deeper, and in the moment's dead silence that ensued, a slight sound was very audible. Colonel Thurstan was seated out of the range of the firelight, in deep shadow; the slight sound was the creaking of his chair as he leaned forward, clenching his hand upon its arm. No one glanced at him; Stafford Ray was looking steadily before him, his wife's eyes were fixed upon the ground; Ralph Ireland was watching Mina Chester. Miss Lucas happened to be sitting on the same side of the hearth as Colonel Thurstan; but the firelight was full upon her. She was leaning back in her chair, gazing across the room at Mina with eyes that seemed absolutely to burn in her dead-white face. Her brows were drawn together, and her lips were set into a strange, pale line. It was not singular that on the dead silence that awaited her words, the girlish voice fell somewhat falteringly as Mina went on:

"There were not many books in my mother's room, and at first she thought it didn't matter, and that anything would do. I think she really didn't want to read, only to have a cover for her thoughts. And I think, too, that as she sat there all alone, dwelling on her fears, they grew worse and worse. For as the time passed on, she did not grow more inclined to sleep, but only more nervous and distressed. At last she began to try to distract her thoughts in earnest. She tried first one book and then another, but she knew them all quite well, and they didn't interest her. The howling of the storm seemed to get between her senses and the words she read.

"It was half-past two by this time, and it gradually came into her head that she could go downstairs very quietly and fetch a new Mudie book that she had left in the drawing-room. She knew that no one could hear her, and she was not afraid of the silence and darkness of the sleeping house, only of her own thoughts. She lighted her candle, opened her bed-room door very softly, and went downstairs. She found her book quite easily, and was just coming out of the drawing-room into the hall, when a slight sound from the landing above made her stop suddenly. The house was quite dark, except for the candle that she carried, and though she had had no thought of being afraid, as I said, that slight sound coming out of

the darkness startled her. It was followed by an interval of total silence; an interval in which the only sound was the wild howling of the storm, which seemed, there in the empty hall, to dash itself against the house like some fierce presence trying to get in. My mother stood and listened with her heart beating painfully. Then she heard something that nearly made it stop beating for the moment altogether. There was no sign of any moving light, but down the dark stairs, behind the bend, footsteps were coming towards her.

"Timid people will do brave things sometimes, even if it is only desperation that urges them. My mother stood quite still, holding up her candle so that its light might be thrown as far as possible, waiting for the figure that was coming down the stairs. In another instant the steps had come round the bend, and she saw"—Mina Chester hesitated a moment, and then said softly —"her lover. He was in evening dress, just as she had seen him three hours before, he had an open letter in his hand, and for a moment, as he came straight across the hall, a wild idea shot through my mother's mind that he had heard her come downstairs and wanted to speak to her.

"'What is it?' she said in a kind of breathless whisper. 'What is it?'

"He stopped instantly, gazing straight at her, and then she realised for the first time, and with a thrill of indescribable awe, that he did not see her. His eyes were wide open, but they were without expression of any kind. His face was very pale, and his lips moved as if he were talking to himself, but for a moment no words were audible. He was walking in his sleep."

"Ah!"

Whether it was a stifled cry, or a sob that broke from Miss Lucas nobody knew. Stafford Ray saw Colonel Thurstan lean forward in his chair and lay a firm, detaining touch upon her as she half started from her seat. And he made a quick sign to his wife which kept Mrs. Ray motionless. There was an instant during which the only sound in the room was Miss Lucas's quick, uneven breathing, as she sank back again into her seat; and then Mina Chester went on:

"He stood looking at her like that, and my mother waited, terrified and bewildered, not knowing what she ought to do. Then some sense of the words she had spoken seemed to penetrate to his brain.

"'Nothing,' he said. 'We can't tell you anything about it, because it might worry you.' He paused a moment, and then went on in the same odd, unnatural tone: 'I've no more to say, sir. My mind is quite made up. I am sorry to differ from you, but you must allow me to decide for myself.'

"A ghostly sense of unreality was creeping over my mother. She could not move or speak. They stood there face to face in the circle of pale light thrown by her candle, and all about them were the shadows of night. They stood there face to face, and close beside them, intangible, with its sad shape looming faintly out of the dimness, was the presence that had haunted my mother all day—the presence of coming trouble; and they and it were quite alone together. She did not speak; but some vague sense of companionship seemed to penetrate him.

"'A week,' he said. 'He thinks a week will be enough to bring me to his way of thinking. Just look here.'

"He held out the letter in his hand as he spoke, and as my mother took it from him mechanically, he said peremptorily:

"'Read it. Read it.'

"Bewildered and confused, and with that sense of unreality growing stronger upon her moment by moment, she obeyed. I have the letter here; it is the letter I found among her papers. This is what it said:

"'I wish to have no further argument with you until you have had time to consider the subject. Leave home to-morrow for a week. If at the end of that time you are not prepared to yield the obedience that a father has a right to exact; if you persist in this marriage which I distinctly forbid; I shall deprive you of the inheritance for which you look as my son.'

"My mother's eyes rested upon the words as though the little sheet of paper fascinated her. They seemed to bring her no shock. The writer of that letter had been ignored in her lover's calculations, ignored, consequently, in her own thoughts. But that this should be the shape into which her vague anticipations must finally resolve themselves; that his father's will should rise up suddenly and stand between her and the man who had asked her to be his wife; seemed as natural to her, in her strained state of nerves, as though she had expected it all the time.

"How long the silence lasted she never knew. She was roused at last by that far-away, unnatural voice.

"'My father will do as he likes, of course,' it said. 'And I shall do as I like. But I won't have her told! I won't have her told!'

"He turned as he spoke, and moved across the hall with rapid, assured steps. Dazed and stupefied, not knowing what to do, hardly feeling, in the immense distance created between them by his unconsciousness, that it was indeed himself, my mother watched him go. She saw him disappear into the darkness; she heard him go on with the same quick, light step in the direction of his own room; she heard his footsteps die away, and she was all alone once more in the sleeping house, with his father's letter in her hand.

"She reached her room again somehow; reached it with all her vague apprehensions focussed and shaped into one overwhelming weight of trouble; a weight of which that little sheet of paper seemed to be the outward sign and token. To get rid of that letter so strangely come by—to return it to its owner—was her first impulse. But the thought brought her face to face with the question that seemed to be pressing upon her from all sides. What ought she to do in the matter? What ought she to say?

"I don't think"—Mina Chester's voice shook a little—"I don't think she really thought for a moment of accepting the sacrifice which her lover was prepared to make for her. I think she felt from the first that it was all over, and that her happiness had been a dream and nothing more. But she shrank so terribly from the task which lay before her. The words that she must speak; the parting, that they must bring about; rose up before her as almost unendurable pain.

"She went downstairs the next morning feeling like a shadow in a dream; she might have thought it all a dream, indeed, but for the terrible reality of that little letter. She spoke of the wind and the rain, when her friend exclaimed at her pale face, and said that the sleeplessness which they had caused had given her a headache. She found herself alone with her lover as the morning went on, but she was not ready; the words would not come. She could not tell him, in the face of the assumed carelessness with which he alluded to his departure, that she knew its cause and all that it involved; and she saw him go away with her secret untold.

"But the weight of her unsuspected misery grew heavier and heavier. Some instinct kept her from speaking on this subject to any one but himself. Dearly as she loved his sister, it seemed to lie between himself and her alone, and her first words on the subject must be to him. By the time the next night, with its long procession of sleepless hours, had gone by, her yearning to speak those words was almost more than she could bear. She could settle to nothing; the necessity for keeping up even the semblance of employment strained her faculties to the utmost; and finding herself, after luncheon, quite alone, she wandered restlessly out of the house, heedless of the burning August sun, and strayed instinctively, with no definite consciousness as yet of the impulse which was forming itself in her mind, into the road which led to the village, ten miles away, where her lover was staying. She was walking slowly along, thinking vaguely of the distance, when she heard wheels behind her, and, glancing round, saw that she was being overtaken by the dog-cart from the house. The only person in it was her friend's cousin.

"I haven't said anything about him, but he had been in the house all the time, and my mother liked him and respected him with all her heart, though I think she was a little in awe of him. He had been kind and gentle with her ever since the beginning of her visit, but during the last two painful days she had fancied—her perceptions were quickened by her great unhappiness, perhaps—that she detected something even unusually considerate, and perhaps pitying in his manner. And as she saw him driving towards her now, the thought seemed suddenly to start up in her mind that here was the one person in the world who would help her kindly and discreetly; asking no questions; putting her to no unnecessary pain. She waited for him, trembling a little, hardly knowing even then what she meant to do.

"He drew up beside her and asked her gently—something; she hardly knew what. And the grave gentleness of his tone put the finishing touch to the impulse that the sight of the dog-cart had created in her. Almost before she knew what she meant to say, she found herself telling him wildly that she must see his cousin; that it was so desperately necessary that she should see him that she must walk to him if no other

way offered; that if he would take her in the dog-cart as far as the market town she would be grateful to him as long as she lived. She saw him hesitate a moment, and she saw his face grow very grave and compassionate. Then with the simplest word of assent he helped her into the dog-cart and drove on.

"He did not speak throughout the drive that followed, neither did my mother. Without a word he drove her through the town to the top of the road by which her way lay; and when he finally helped her out of the dog-cart, half the intensity of her gratitude to him was for his merciful silence. She walked on along the road, and he turned round and drove away

"It was three miles still to the village for which my mother was bound. But the main difficulty of the journey was surmounted, and my mother had burnt her ships behind her. And now that she was pledged, so to speak, to that interview with her lover for which she had so craved, a sudden wave of overwhelming doubt and fear rose up upon her. He must give her up; on that point there was no shadow of question in her mind; she would not stand between him and his father's favour, between him and all his future hopes. But could he be persuaded? Would her arguments prevail with him? Would she herself have strength and courage to combat his assurances, his pleadings, perhaps even his reproaches? She was all alone there in the road; adrift, practically, in a strange part of the country, and as these thoughts crowded upon her, my mother stood still and began to reflect. Was she indeed doing the best that could be done? Was there no way of sparing him—of sparing both—the scene that lay before them?

"How it first gradually occurred to her that there was another way, my mother could never tell me. In what shape or form the idea on which she subsequently acted first presented itself to her she never knew. To go away—to go away secretly; to disappear out of his life leaving no trace by which he could find her; and thus to set him free. This was the idea with which she found herself almost familiar before she realised that it had even suggested itself to her.

"It was such a desperate cutting of the knot as suggests itself occasionally to timid and gentle natures. My mother could not face the pain of parting; she could not trust herself within the circle of her lover's influence. But she could nerve herself to leave him, believing that it was for his good, without a word or sign; and she could trust herself to be true to her purpose even through the long lonely heart-break that must lie before her.

"The means of carrying her plan into action arranged themselves before her rapidly and almost unconsciously. Half an hour after the dog-cart left her, she was walking rapidly, and like one who dreads pursuit, in the direction of a little station of which she knew about five miles off. From thence she took the train to London, and there she deliberately destroyed all traces of her whereabouts. She had no means of knowing what passed in the home she had left; she had no means of ever learning how her lover bore her disappearance. She had crushed out all her own hopes of happiness for his sake, and I think it was not unnatural that she should persuade herself that she had not sacrificed herself in vain, and that in time he would forget her, and make some happier girl his wife. To think so was her only consolation. Her health gave way, and all her hope and energy seemed gradually to decay. She married my father two years later; married him, gratefully and confessedly, for the protection and support that he could give her. But the story of the one love of her life hangs round this old faded letter. She made a mistake; ah, I know, I know she made a mistake, but it was for his sake she did it, and she is dead."

The girlish voice quivered pitifully, broke, and stopped. Mina Chester rose and crossed the room in the darkness to where Miss Lucas sat. She laid a folded letter, yellow and worn with age, gently in her hand, and then went quickly out of the room.

The fire had sunk to a dull red glow, and in the dim uncertain light, figures might rise, move silently, and so depart unnoticed. Five minutes later a man and a woman were left alone, motionless and silent. Then the man rose slowly. He, too, went away, and the woman was left alone.

CHAPTER XII. IN SPITE OF ALL.

It is impossible to say what it is that creates mental atmosphere in a house; but it is equally impossible to deny that such a thing exists. The atmosphere of High Firs on the following morning was most pronounced in character. Suppressed excite-

nent, nervousness, and suspense were all-ervading. Miss Lucas had not appeared ither at dinner on the previous night or t breakfast this morning. And breakfast n particular had been a meal characterised y long silences and spasmodic attempts at onversation.

Immediately after breakfast Miss Chester, ale and nervous, had gone out into the arden, and Ralph Ireland had shortly fterwards disappeared in the same direction. Mrs. Ray, forced to expend her obvious gitation on domestic details, had been in he act of retreating to the kitchen premises when she heard Colonel Thurstan, speaking almost for the first time that morning, ask her husband to come with him for a few moments into the library.

The traces of a sleepless night were very evident on Colonel Thurstan's face as he and his host stood face to face a few minutes later by the library fire. He made no pause or prelude but came directly to the point.

"Ray," he said, "I must go away at once. There's a train at two-fifty. Can you send me in to it?"

Stafford Ray paused a minute. He was looking steadily at the fire.

"Yes," he said in a low voice, "anything you please, Thurstan, of course."

"You will make my excuses to your wife," the other went on. "I can't say too emphatically that my own private affairs, only, take me away."

There was a moment's silence, and then Stafford Ray said:

"You feel that you must go?"

A faint dull colour mounted to Colonel Thurstan's forehead, and he glanced for the first time at his host's averted face.

"You have understood, then?" he said quietly. "Yes, I suppose it was inevitable."

"Must you go?" repeated Stafford Ray in the same low tone.

Colonel Thurstan moved abruptly, and walked to the window.

"What else can I do?" he said, and the words came from between set teeth. "The sight of me will be hateful to her. I can't spare her anything except my presence."

There was another silence and then Stafford Ray moved.

"It's for you to decide," he said. "The dog-cart shall be ready for you at two o'clock; only, is it wise to take things for granted?"

He did not wait for an answer, and Colonel Thurstan offered none. The door had closed behind his host before he turned. He crossed the room and sat down at the writing-table, but he made no attempt to occupy himself. He rested his elbows on the table, and let his forehead fall forward on his clenched hands. The moments passed, and still he did not stir. Half an hour, three quarters, one hour had gone by, and then a touch upon the handle of the door made him start violently. He moved, making an obvious effort to draw his features into an expression less haggard and grief-stricken. Then the door opened, and he rose suddenly to his feet, his face drawn and white, as Miss Lucas came into the room. She shut the door, and came slowly towards him.

Barely eighteen hours had passed since she had confronted him so disdainfully in the drawing-room, on the previous afternoon, but time had no share in the change that those hours had wrought in her. Her blue eyes were sunken, and there was no colour even in her lips. There were strange new lines about her mouth, and resolutely as her lips were set their steadiness seemed to be temporary only. Dignity was as innate in her as was her womanly grace, but at that moment the proud self-control of her manner and bearing only enhanced the utter humiliation with which her whole personality seemed in some indescribable way to be pervaded. She stood quite still before him, looking, not at him, but at the ground between them. Then she spoke.

"I haven't come to ask you to forgive me," she said. "No forgiveness could be wide enough to cover all the wrong I have done you. But I thought I should like you to know there are no words that can express my sense of my own injustice, or the depths of my self-contempt."

She stopped, catching her breath painfully, as he interposed quickly and huskily.

"Don't speak like that," he said. "Don't speak like that, for Heaven's sake, Anne!"

"It has taken a voice from the dead to convince me," she said. Her voice shook a little. "But not even the dead can undo the wrong I've done you. Not even the dead can undo the past. There's only one thing I should like to say. I told our story as I did, recklessly, not caring how I hurt myself, wishing to stir up the old fire of my passion against you, wishing to wound you, to humiliate you, to insult you. Will you forgive me for that only, out of

all the rest? For the sake of what it has brought about."

"If there is anything to forgive, you need not ask forgiveness of me, Anne," he said hoarsely. "You know it is yours without the asking."

She looked up at him for a moment, steadily. Then her eyes fell again.

"That's all, then," she said. "Good-bye, John."

Almost before he realised what she was doing, she had turned away and crossed the room. Her hand was actually on the door, when suddenly and for no apparent reason Stafford Ray's words flashed through Colonel Thurstan's brain. "Is it wise to take things for granted?" In another instant, he, too, had crossed the room and was standing close beside her.

"Not like this!" he cried. "After so many years, Anne; not like this!"

She paused, startled and uncertain, lifting her eyes to his face.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"You said that no forgiveness could cover up what is past," he returned rapidly. "Is there nothing else between us, Anne? Nothing that has survived through everything; in spite of everything; never to be crushed out? Anne, I love you. I love you now as I loved you eighteen years ago, as I shall love you till I die. If anything survives of what you could have given to me once, give it me now."

She had drawn back a step, and was facing him, her face dead-white against the dark oak of the door, her lips trembling.

"It is too late," she said; "we are too old. I was a girl then; now I am almost an old woman. We can be friends, John, perhaps—if you will; but the time for anything else is past. I have wasted it."

He had come nearer to her and was looking straight down into her face. His voice as he answered her was strong and tender, and insistent.

"We are boy and girl no longer," he said. "That is true. Many of the years we might have spent together lie behind us; that is true too. Then let us make the most of those that are still to come. Anne, Anne, you did love me, once! You told me so that night on the mountain; you have told me so, even when you have hated me most, in the telling of our story. Time and its cunning have brought us together at last. Don't let it be in vain."

She did not take her eyes from his; his gaze seemed to hold her fascinated. She did not speak at once, and when her words came at last, they were a mere whisper.

"In spite of all?" she said, "in spite of all?"

"Because of all!" he answered. "For auld lang syne, Anne, give me what I have waited for these eighteen years."

The colour was coming and going in her cheeks, as though those eighteen years of which he spoke were all annihilated, and she were a girl again. She seemed to hesitate and waver, then suddenly she drew back and clasped her hands over her face.

"How can you want me?" she said. "How can you do anything but hate me, here in this house, where I treated you so badly!"

"Here, in this house, where we were boy and girl together!"

And there, where they had played together as children, he took her, unresisting, into his arms.

It was only for a moment, but in that moment the pain of eighteen years was cancelled, the broken hopes of youth were all made good. It was a moment too perfect even to be prolonged, and he made no effort to detain her when she released herself, trembling from head to foot, her eyes full of tears, her cheeks flushed, and rushed away from him out of the room. She went on across the hall with the same blind, headlong movement; and at the foot of the stairs she brushed against some one. Lifting her eyes with an incoherent word of apology, she saw that it was Mina Chester. With a low cry of overflowing love and happiness, she caught the girl impulsively in her arms.

"Her daughter!" she said. "Her daughter! And I might never have known!"

They stood for a second or two, almost motionless. Mina had thrown her arms round the elder woman with a quick, clinging pressure, laying her head on her shoulder, with a gesture which seemed to tell of a special longing for sympathy and tenderness. She, too, was trembling very much, and she did not lift her face even when Miss Lucas spoke again, in tender, shaken tones.

"You will be fond of me, won't you, Mina? I have never loved any woman

as I loved your mother. You will let me try to make you happy. You——"

She had taken one of the girl's hands in hers, and was carrying it in quick impulsive fashion to her cheek, when she suddenly stopped short. Every vestige of colour died slowly out of her face; her eyes, dilated, transfixed in expression, were fastened on the long white fingers that she held. It was Mina's left hand, and on the third finger there was a ring. It was a man's seal ring; a sapphire, curiously set in old gold.

"Where did you get that?"

The words came from her slowly, hoarsely, and with long pauses between. Startled by her tone the girl lifted her head suddenly; her face was tremulous and flushed. But her own words seemed to have broken the spell that held Miss Lucas, and she went on rapidly:

"He didn't give it to your mother; it was on his finger when I saw him last. Oh, Gervase! Child, child, who gave it to you? Where did you get it? Tell me!"

She looked from the ring to Mina's face. She was still holding the hand on which it rested, and the girl, half frightened, confused, and tremulous, answered:

"The ring? He has just given it to me. He wants me to wear it until—until he gets me another. Mr. Ireland, I mean. He says—I have promised——"

But the shy, faltering confession was not finished.

"Mr. Ireland?" interposed Miss Lucas almost wildly. "Where did he get it, then? Where is he?"

"It was his friend's," said Mina. "The friend he told us of the other night."

A cry broke from Miss Lucas, and at the same moment the library door opened, and with swift, uncertain steps she crossed the hall to Colonel Thurstan as he stood upon the threshold.

"Gervase!" she said. "Ah, John—John, Gervase at last—at last!"

CHAPTER XIII. FOR AULD LANG SYNE.

"But what I didn't understand at all," said Mrs. Ray, "was that it all happened in this house. I guessed at once—didn't I, Stafford?—that the Lucy of Miss Lucas's story was Miss Lucas herself, and that James was Colonel Thurstan. Of course"—Mrs. Ray's eager tone became subdued—"we none of us thought, until Miss Lucas recognised the ring, that Mr. Ireland's friend was her brother Geoffrey—Gervase his name was really, I know—though I quite realised, when Miss Chester told her story, that her mother was Netta Strangeways. But it simply never entered my head that High Firs was the house."

They were sitting round the fire in the drawing-room, the same group that had sat there night after night for nearly a fortnight; the same group, but so different. They were all there; Colonel Thurstan and Miss Lucas, Mina Chester and Ralph Ireland, Mrs. Ray and her husband. But all the constraint, the atmosphere of antagonism and reserve that had pervaded the party ever since it came together, had wholly disappeared. On every face, differing though they might in everything else, there rested the same indefinable brightness; touched, in Miss Lucas and Colonel Thurstan, with the peace and rest of a long-lived sorrow healed at last; deepening and glowing in Mina Chester and Ralph Ireland with the unquestioning happiness and radiance of first love; resting on the host as calm satisfaction; and on the hostess as freedom from unendurable care.

A little silence, the silence of absolute contentment, had preceded Mrs. Ray's remark, and it was followed by a moment's pause. Then Colonel Thurstan glanced across at Stafford Ray, and said:

"You knew it, Ray?"

Stafford Ray made a slight gesture of assent.

"Yes," he said, "I hardly know how; but I did know from the first. I think it was partly Miss Lucas's likeness to the picture in the hall that helped me. I felt that she must be a Woodroffe, and I only wondered whether she had assumed the name of Lucas when she came here. And then once on the scent, I recognised the rooms as you told your stories, and I recognised the country round."

"How angry I was with you for helping me out of that difficulty about the portrait," said Miss Lucas softly to Colonel Thurstan.

Then she turned impulsively to Mrs. Ray.

"It wasn't quite fair, perhaps," she said, "but you do understand now, don't you, that I didn't change my name on purpose. I was Anne Woodroffe till five years ago, then I had to change my name because of some money that was left to me."

"The old place has been waiting for its rightful owners for a long time," said

Stafford Ray. "I am glad they are to come back to it, at last."

Nobody but herself knew what gladness had been brought to Mrs. Ray's heart by the brief conversation that had taken place between Colonel Thurstan and her husband a few hours earlier with reference to the transfer of High Firs. Colonel Thurstan and Miss Lucas desired to buy the place back, and the sum which they proposed to pay for it would relieve Mrs. Ray's life of its one unendurable burden: the spectre of the possible necessity for a return to town life for her husband. She was very tenderhearted in her own great happiness, and her eyes filled with tears as Miss Lucas said in a low voice:

"Its rightful owner will never come back to it."

The words were succeeded by a short silence. Perhaps every one who heard them was thinking more or less pitifully of the man to whom they referred—the Gervase Woodroffe from whose hands High Firs had passed to strangers; the hero of that drama of blighted hopes and ruined prospects that had played itself out under that roof so many years before; of whose life they had heard from his sister's lips; of whose death they had heard, as she herself had heard, from the lips of a stranger. Of the identity of Gervase Woodroffe with the "George" of Ralph Ireland's story, there was no doubt. The ring itself, which now sparkled on Miss Lucas's hand; the ring bearing the Woodroffe crest, and engraved inside with the initials G. W.; was proof enough for her; and all the additional description that the young man had eagerly given had gone to confirm the evidence of that mute witness. Gervase Woodroffe was dead. If he had lived useless and idle for the sake of the one woman he had loved, he had died strong and self-sacrificing for the womanliness which that love had rendered sacred to him.

It was Ralph Ireland who broke the silence.

"And after all," he said, "if it hadn't been for Mrs. Ray's advertisement, all this would never have come about."

He spoke with rather forced cheerfulness, evidently with the kindly intention of leading away from the sadder topic on which they had fallen, and Stafford Ray seconded him instantly.

He turned to his wife with a twinkle in his eyes as he answered the young man.

"The advertisement?" he said; "was it the advertisement, Kitty, do you think? or was it the old house and the memories that hang about it? Miss Lucas, was it the advertisement that tempted you, or had you any private reason for coming?"

Miss Lucas smiled.

"I came because the old house drew me," she said. "Mrs. Ray will forgive me for that, because, you see, I didn't know her then."

"And why did you come, Thurstan?" continued Stafford Ray.

"For the sake of old times."

Stafford Ray's eyes moved on to Ralph Ireland, and the young man answered their half-laughing question.

"I came," he said in a low, rather shamefaced tone, "because I knew that this was George's county, and I wanted to know it."

Stafford Ray's eyes were not laughing any longer. They were very gentle as he turned them on Mina Chester.

"My mother loved High Firs," she said softly. "She loved it till she died, for the sake of what came to her and what she left under its roof. I came here for her sake."

"For auld lang syne, first and last," said Stafford Ray. "Kitty, your advertisement hasn't a chance!"

There were tears in Mrs. Ray's eyes, and a quiver in her voice, though she was laughing too, as she said stoutly:

"You may say what you like, Stafford, but I shall always maintain that it was the advertisement that gave auld lang syne its chance."

ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Right of Translation is reserved by the Authors.

HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JAPANESE PECULIARITIES.—Mr. Savage Landor says: "Among our own ladies, the custom of 'painting' themselves is not uncommon, but it is not practised by most sensible women; in Japan it forms part of the ordinary woman's daily toilette. Many a wicked story is current in Japan of comical mistakes made by Japanese ladies in misplacing the different items of wearing apparel. The story goes of a certain marchioness who, having ordered a dress and underclothing in Paris, wrote to the milliner requesting her to pack the different articles in the order in which they were to be worn. The case reached its destination in safety, but was unfortunately opened at the wrong end, and the noble lady was seen at a garden party wearing her chemise, which she had put on the top of everything else, as a sort of mantilla, as it was the last thing she found at the bottom of the case! I myself have seen, with my own eyes, a lady, occupying one of the highest positions in Tokyo, nearly suffocated through having put on her corset the wrong way up! It is an everyday occurrence, especially in the streets of Tokyo, to see men wearing European boots and a bowler hat, while the rest of the body is only clad in what we generally use as underclothing; yet those men think themselves dressed just like Europeans.

CAULIFLOWER IN CREAM.—Prepare as above, but only boil half an hour. Drain off the water and simmer half an hour longer in one pint each of milk and hot water, with two teaspoonfuls of salt. Take it up tenderly with a skimmer, and serve with a cream sauce made as follows:—Put a pint of cream in a double boiler, and let it just come to a boil. Have ready a tablespoonful of flour in which you have put salt and white pepper to taste. Reserve enough of the cream (a little over half a cupful) to mix this smooth, then stir into the boiling cream. Let it boil two or three minutes, and serve with the cauliflower. This is a nice sauce for nearly every kind of vegetable, and also for fish.

CELERY SAUCE FOR TURKEY.—Boil a head of celery until quite tender, then put it through a sieve, put the yolk of an egg in a basin, and beat it well with the strained juice of a lemon, add the celery, and a couple of spoonfuls of liquor in which the turkey was boiled; salt and pepper to taste.

SMOOTH FACES.—There would be fewer wrinkles on the human face if one would only correct oneself of the bad habit of knitting the brows, which plant indelibly certain little lines between the eyebrows. Raising the eyebrows apropos of nothing and everything is a habit for which one pays with long horizontal lines across the forehead, which ages a person at least ten years; an artificial stereotyped smile prints two long lines from the nose to the corners of the mouth. To remain late at night poring over novels digs around the eyes those terrible crow's-feet which disfigure the prettiest face. Those who laugh much have small wrinkles on the cheek and around the mouth, which are often thought not unpleasant; and we must not interfere with these, for gayness is a virtue to be cultivated, and not avoided.

HOME SHOPPING.—It is most advantageous to know just where to find such fabrics as are moderate in price, fashionable, and durable, these being qualities which all shopkeepers claim for their goods, but which, in reality, few textures possess, simply because the average tradesman is bent upon securing such enormous profits. Hence the reason why so many ladies are conducting their shopping from home, thereby saving themselves trouble, annoyance, and subsequent disappointment; for how many shops one may enter before finding exactly the required article or fabric, and how often one is talked and persuaded into buying a totally different article to that fixed upon. Whereas, in shopping by post, one receives the patterns, making a leisurely selection, after having well studied and examined the fabric chosen.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.—At a dinner party there were two sisters present, one a widow who had just emerged from her weeds, the other not long married, whose husband had lately gone out to India for a short term. A young barrister present was deputed to take the widow down to dinner. Unfortunately he was under the impression that his partner was the married lady whose husband had just arrived in India. The conversation between them commenced by the lady's remarking how extremely hot it was. "Yes, it is very hot," replied the young barrister. Then a happy thought suggested itself to him, and he added with a cheerful smile, "But not so hot as the place to which your husband has gone." The look with which the widow answered this "happy thought" will haunt that young barrister till the day of his death.

How to Toast Muffins.—The proper way to toast muffins is first of all, with either a fork or your finger and thumb, break the muffin all round the sides, then toast the muffin until the outsides are nice and crisp, but they should not be hard. Divide the muffin carefully with two forks, never cut it with a knife; then either pour some warm butter over it, or place here and there on either half some pieces of butter; it should never be spread. Place on a hot plate, and divide in four, and serve very hot. So often muffins are not cooked enough and are made heavy by being cut.

Women Rate-Collectors.—At a recent special meeting of the Bermondsey Guardians for the purpose of appointing two rate-collectors, the claims of eight out of sixty-three applicants were submitted. One of the two finally chosen was Mrs. Holland, the widow of a rate-collector who died in October. The district held by the late collector was divided into two, and the salaries were fixed at two hundred and ten pounds, rising to two hundred and fifty pounds, each collector. Mrs. Holland's election gave rise to an exciting division.

Death of Rubinstein.—Anton Rubinstein, the famous musician, died at Peterhof, near St. Petersburg, on the 20th ultimo, of heart disease. The great pianist and composer was sixty-five years of age, having been born in Volhynia, near the Russo-Austrian frontier, on the 30th November, 1829. When seven years of age he began to receive regular tuition in music at Moscow, and before he was thirteen he undertook his first grand artistic tour, during which he visited London and many of the principal towns in England. As a pianist he was in the very first rank, and as a composer he was one of the most gifted of the younger generations.

Chapped Lips and Hands.—A good emollient for chapped hands and lips is prepared as follows:—Dissolve half an ounce of beeswax in half an ounce of sweet oil. It will readily dissolve if placed in an old cup or saucer just inside a cool oven or at the side of the fire. When dissolved add a few drops of rose-water or any preferred scent. Stir all the time till quite cold, or the ingredients will separate again while cooling. Use as often as required. This preparation is perfectly harmless, effectual, and, at the same time, inexpensive. When the lips or hands are badly chapped it should be applied several times during the day.

The Creeper par Excellence for a London or town garden, where a screen is required, or an ugly fence or wall to be hidden, is, however, the wild clematis, traveller's joy, or maiden's bower (C. vitalba). Once planted, this grows like a weed anywhere, and clothes all within its reach with a close rich mantle of dark glossy green. The fluffy greenish white blossoms are also often produced quite freely, and form an additional attraction.

Veronicas.—In the shrubby veronicas we have yet another delightful class of autumn-flowering plants, and very nearly hardy ones, too. I am reminded of them by having just cut a handful of sprays from a fine plant of the ordinary V. Andersoni, each with its wealth of glossy foliage, and two or more compact spikes of soft violet purple blossoms. The plant is in a cool greenhouse, where it will remain in bloom until nearly or quite Christmas, but it does well in a sheltered garden, or in a warm climate, in the open air, while it also makes an excellent window-plant. The culture is most simple, the plants growing, either in pots or planted out, as freely as a euonymus, all that is necessary being to protect them in some way from severe frost. V. decussata has much smaller, box-like foliage, also with blue flowers; V. Blue Gem is very dwarf and compact, and almost always in bloom, and there are several other forms. V. Traversi is a hardy shrub from New Zealand, becoming in the summer a perfect cloud of pretty white blossoms.

Roast Turkey.—If the turkey be a young one, the legs will be smooth and black; if recently killed, the eyes will be full and bright. It is very essential to wipe the inside scrupulously clean. Reserve the liver and gizzard to skewer into the wings, and boil the remaining giblets for gravy. While roasting, be sure to keep basting the bird. Seasoning: This usually consists of sausages mixed with breadcrumbs and an egg, while some prefer oyster, veal, or chestnut and bacon stuffing. The turkey should be served with bread-sauce, and good brown gravy, and the dish should be garnished with saus.ages.

Boiled Cauliflower.—Wash and trim and lay in weak salt and water to draw out any insects that may have found refuge within it; then put in a bag made of net and into boiling well-salted water. Let boil an hour, drain it, keeping it hot and whole; pour over it a drawn butter sauce and send to the table, where it should be cut up with a silver knife.

CURE OF OBESITY.—Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., has long been famous for his remedy for the cure of obesity. Those who suffer from this difficulty will, by sending 4d. to the above address, receive Mr. Russell's pamphlet, containing testimonials from a great number of persons who have been benefited by the treatment, as well as a recipe for it. It matters not what be the weather or season, those who are troubled suffer equally in hot weather and in cold; in summer they are overburdened by their own weight, in winter bronchial ailments are set up through the least cold, as the air tubes are not free to act, as they would otherwise do without the obstruction. Mr. Russell undertakes that persons under his treatment should lose one stone a month in weight, and that their health, strength, and activity should be regenerated.

The following are extracts from other journals:

A POSITIVE REMEDY FOR CORPULENCE.—Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. We have recently received a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), and is a cheap issue (only 4d.). published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Our space will not do justice to this book; send for it yourself. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of "The Tablet," the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a marchioness, writes from Madrid:—'My son, Count ——, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos—*i.e.*, 34 lbs.' Another writes:—'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes:—'I am just half the size.' A fourth:—'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8 lbs. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes:—'A reduction of 18 lbs. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes:—'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says:—'It reduced me considerably, not only in the body, but all over.'" The author is very positive. He says:—"Step on a weighing machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2 lbs. in weight without the slightest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations."—"Cork Herald."

CURE FOR OBESITY AT LAST.—Now Monsieur Pasteur and great Mr. Koch, and all other "made in Germany" cures, look well to your laurels. We have now an Englishman who has discovered a real remedy for corpulence. The proof of this is demonstrated by a person stepping on a weighing-machine in twenty-four hours after commencing his treatment. Not so with your "dog-bite" business, M. Pasteur, and not so with your bacillic exterminator, Mr. Koch. The results of your investigations are comparatively cloudy. Who knows whether a person, for instance, would have died from hydrophobia, and how is it that the inoculation is admitted to fail on many occasions? Simply because the "cure" is not perfect. Now let all fat persons read "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), published by F. C. Russell, our British Specialist, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., price only 4d., but worth twenty times as much. There you will find that an English chemist can remove 14 lbs. of superfluous fat and waste from the system in seven days with herbs which you can gather in our British meadows. He has likewise shown the Continental theorists that their doctrines are untenable when they say that to reduce fat one must eat and drink less. The wind is completely out of their sails, for patients under Mr. Russell's treatment become more healthy, and their appetite improves immediately after the removal of the first 2 lbs. of unhealthy accumulation, and this happens in about twenty-four hours. Send for this book. We have just had it brought under our notice; it is well worth reading.—"Dover Express."

THERE are many so-called Hair Restorers, but amongst them are many that are absolutely injurious to the head, in consequence of the dangerous ingredients they contain. "Eau Horn" we can vouch for as being really beneficial in cases of Premature Baldness, and for persons with thin hair, as if used according to the directions, it will cause the hair to grow, will keep the scalp free from scurf, and impart a rich, glossy appearance to the hair. Doctor Horn's "Acesma" is also exceedingly good for restoring grey or faded hair, and is specially recommended for ladies' long hair. We may also mention his Skin Food for the complexion, which will cure wrinkles and crow's-feet, and if applied every night will cure all roughness, irritation, etc., of the skin. We strongly advise you to read Doctor Horn's book, "The Human Hair, Its Treatment in Health and Disease," which can be obtained—as well as the above—from Doctor Horn, Newport, Isle of Wight, or from Cassie and Company, 49, Newgate Street, E.C., post free for six stamps.

PERFUMES.—Those who wish to give a Christmas or New Year's present that is sure to be appreciated, cannot do better than purchase one of Messrs. Rimmel's boxes of new perfume. Each box contains three bottles, and invariably three of the choicest scents to be met with. The house of Rimmel certainly stands at the top of the tree for choice perfumes. Any of their establishments will supply you by either writing or calling at 96, Strand, 64, Cheapside, or 180, Regent Street, London.

WE have seen many Dress Shields, but certainly none will compare with Kleinert's Invincible Seamless Stockinet Dress Shield, which is not only waterproof but soft and odourless. They absorb all moisture freely and dry quickly; can be easily washed, and will retain their shape. The proprietors of Kleinert's Invincible Shields warrant them to give entire satisfaction, and will not only refund the money if this is not so, but will hold themselves responsible for any damage to dress. They are to be obtained at all drapers' and ladies' outfitters'.

THOSE who value a clear complexion, with soft, smooth skin, free from unsightly pimples, blotches, etc., cannot do better than try Cullwick's Blood Tablets, which are far better than many so-called complexion washes, etc., and for eczema and skin eruptions you should try Cullwick's Skin Ointment. Both are sold by all chemists, or by Martin, Chemist, of Southampton.

BEETHAM'S Fragrant Rose Leaf Powder is a deliciously scented powder for the skin, and should be on every lady's dressing-table, and if used in conjunction with Beetham's Glycerine and Cucumber, there is very little that is required to make the skin soft and velvety. Both these can be obtained from all chemists, or direct from M. Beetham and Son, Chemists, Cheltenham.

A BOON TO DRESSMAKERS. — Prym's patent reform hooks and eyes may really be termed a boon to dressmakers, so much trouble and time do they save in finishing off a bodice. The following are a few of the advantages of using them. Firstly, they can be accurately and easily sewn on by the most inexperienced person. Secondly, Prym's hooks and eyes, when sewn on regularly, as indicated in the illustrated diagram which accompanies them, close the opening the whole length, thus obviating all unsightly gaping-open. Thirdly, the hook is quite a different and superior patent to anything yet seen, having a small raised piece, which keeps them from opening by themselves; and, fourthly, these hooks are not in the least injured through washing and ironing.

JELLIES.—These are one of the indispensable additions to the Christmas fare, and really contribute quite as much to the appearance of the table as to the palate, as a rule. But Messrs. Chivers are the exception to this rule, for their famous gold medal jellies are truly delicious, besides being economical. They are flavoured all ready for use, and though many may think the addition of a little brandy or sherry an improvement, we think them equally good without any addition whatever beyond the necessary amount of water required to dissolve them. Housewives who once test these jellies will never use any other again. All grocers keep them. They are sold in pint quantities at fourpence halfpenny, or quarts, eightpence. If not obtainable at the nearest grocer's, a half-pint sample packet will be sent for twopence halfpenny direct from S. Chivers and Sons, Histon, Cambridge.

BOILED TURKEY.—Prepare the turkey as for roasting; wipe it dry, and rub with pepper and salt. Make a stuffing of moistened breadcrumbs, and butter, pepper, salt, and thyme—quantity of each according to taste. Fill the crop and body of the bird with this, and sew up securely. Boil the bird for two or three hours, according to its size and age, and serve with celery or oyster sauces, or melted butter.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

Bilious & Nervous Disorders,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation,

Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion,

Disordered Liver, & Female Ailments.

In Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.
The 1s. 1½d. Box contains Fifty-six Pills.
The SALE is now SIX MILLION BOXES Per Annum.

Prepared only by the Proprietor—

THOMAS BEECHAM, ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS AND PATENT MEDICINE DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

GOLD MEDAL, NEW ZEALAND, 1882.

SYMINGTON'S
WORLD RENOWNED
HIGH PRESSURE STEAM PREPARED
PEA FLOUR
PEA SOUP
SEASONED AND FLAVOURED
TRADE MARK
In Tins and Packets.
SOLD EVERYWHERE

EXPORT AGENT—J. T. MORTON, LONDON.

GOLD MEDAL, NEW ZEALAND, 1882.

SYMINGTON'S
EGYPTIAN FOOD.

This valuable Food contains as much nutriment as meat.
Used at SMEDLEY'S, MATLOCK, and all the leading Hydropathic Establishments.
FOR INVALIDS AND DELICATE CHILDREN.
MOST EASILY DIGESTED.
Sold in Tins, 1s. per lb., by all Grocers and Chemists.
MANUFACTORY:
Bowden Steam Mills, Market Harborough.

EXQUISITE MODELS. PERFECT FIT. GUARANTEED WEAR.



THE Y & N PATENT
DIAGONAL SEAM CORSETS.
Patented in England and on the Continent.
Will not split in the Seams nor tear in the Fabric.
Made in White, Black, and all the fashionable colours and shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil. Also in the New Sanitary Woollen Cloth.
4/11, 5/11, 6/11, 7/11
PER PAIR, AND UPWARDS.
Three Gold Medals.
Sold by the principal Drapers and Ladies' Outfitters.

RIMMEL'S TOILET VINEGAR.
Has for over HALF A CENTURY sustained its HIGH REPUTATION as an Indispensable Toilet Requisite.
RIMMEL'S Specialities for the Toilet, Perfumes, Soaps, Powders, etc.
TRADE MARK. REGISTERED
Eugene Rimmel (Limited) call special attention to their CHOICE and VARIED collection of
XMAS & NEW YEAR'S GOODS.
Sold Everywhere.
CAUTION.—Note Name and Trade Mark on all Goods.
96, Strand, 128, Regent Street, 64, Cheapside, London, and Paris.

Ask your Grocer for

Crosse & Blackwell's

FRESH FRUIT JAMS & JELLIES,

which are made from Freshly Gathered Fruits and Refined Sugar.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL, LIMITED.

SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

THE WONDERFUL AT 2/ A YARD.
VELVETEEN

Can only be obtained direct from LEWIS'S, in Market Street, Manchester.
Ladies are asked to write on an ordinary post-card for PATTERNS, POST FREE.

The best for DECORATIVE Purposes as it washes well.

Black and all the most beautiful Colours now worn. Fast Pile, Fast Dyed, Every inch guaranteed. "The Finest ever shown—thoroughly durable."
If a Dress should wear badly or be in any respect faulty! LEWIS'S will GIVE a NEW DRESS for nothing at all, and Pay the full cost for Making and Trimming. This quality is sold by the best Drapers at 3/6, 4/6, and 5/6 a yard, but Lewis's *manufacture* this Velveteen themselves, and sell it *direct* to the public at 2/- a yard
Carriage Paid on All Orders.

CAUTION.
See that every yard is stamped with the Trade Mark containing fac-simile of Lewis's signature.

DRESS MATERIALS WONDERFUL in Value, Style, Beauty, and Variety. Ladies, write for the New Patterns. Please mention "All the Year Round" and address—

LEWIS'S IN MARKET STREET MANCHESTER.

LIEBIG "COMPANY'S" EXTRACT OF BEEF

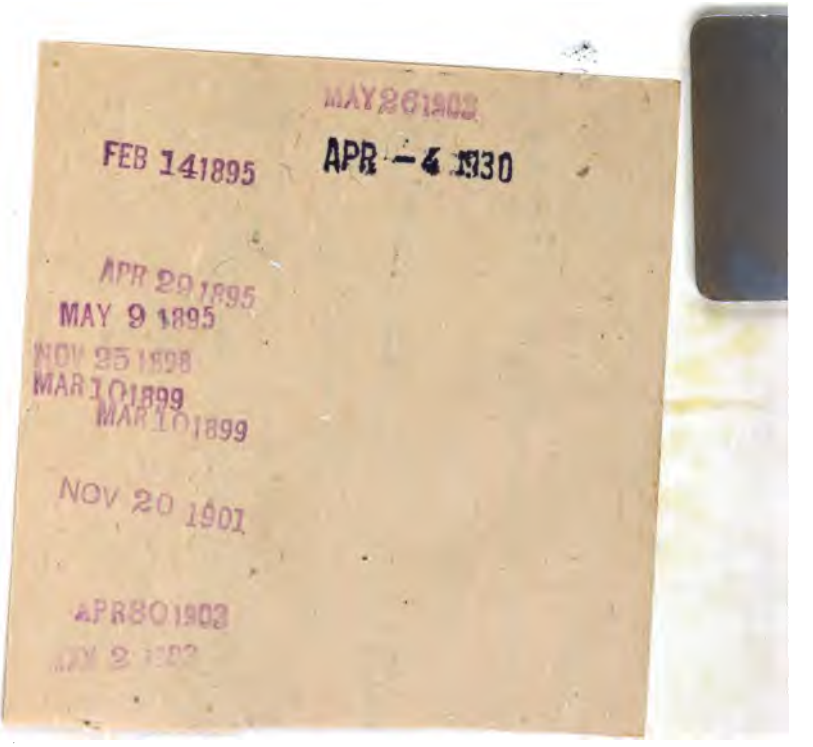
Is the finest Meat flavouring Stock for Soups, Sauces, Made Dishes, &c.

J. Liebig

Genuine only with **Blue Signature** across the Label.
Sole Manufactory: FRAY BENTOS, SOUTH AMERICA.

The Company's NEW COOKERY BOOK sent free on application to
LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT COMPANY, LIMITED,
9, Fenchurch Avenue, London, E.C.

F. M. EVANS & CO., LIMITED, CRYSTAL PALACE, S.E.


MAY 26 1902
FEB 14 1895
APR - 4 1930
APR 29 1895
MAY 9 1895
NOV 25 1898
MAR 10 1899
MAR 10 1899
NOV 20 1901
APR 8 0 1903

